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1884

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MANOR HOUSE, MANOR.





THE  
RIGHT HON. BENJAMIN DISRAELI,  
EARL OF BEACONSFIELD, K.G.,  
AND HIS TIMES.

BY  
ALEXANDER CHARLES EWALD, F.S.A.,  
AUTHOR OF "SIR ROBERT WALPOLE, A POLITICAL BIOGRAPHY;" "THE LIFE AND TIMES OF PRINCE  
CHARLES STUART;" "REPRESENTATIVE STATESMEN," ETC., ETC.

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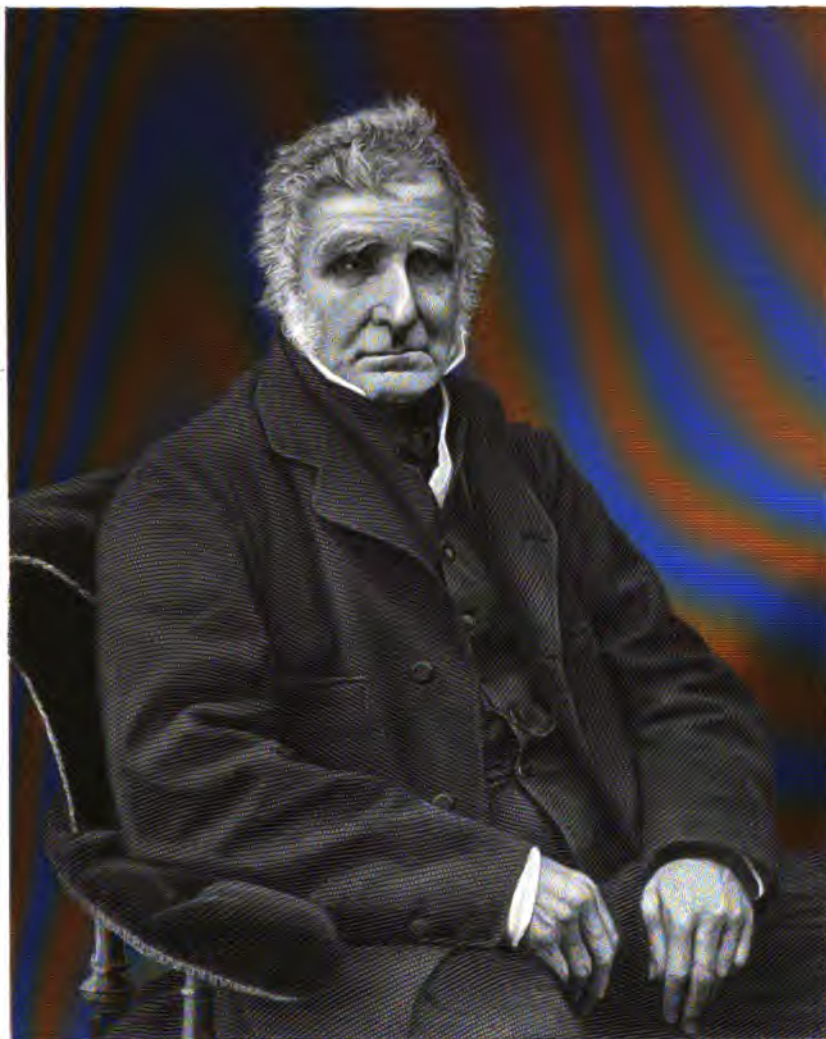
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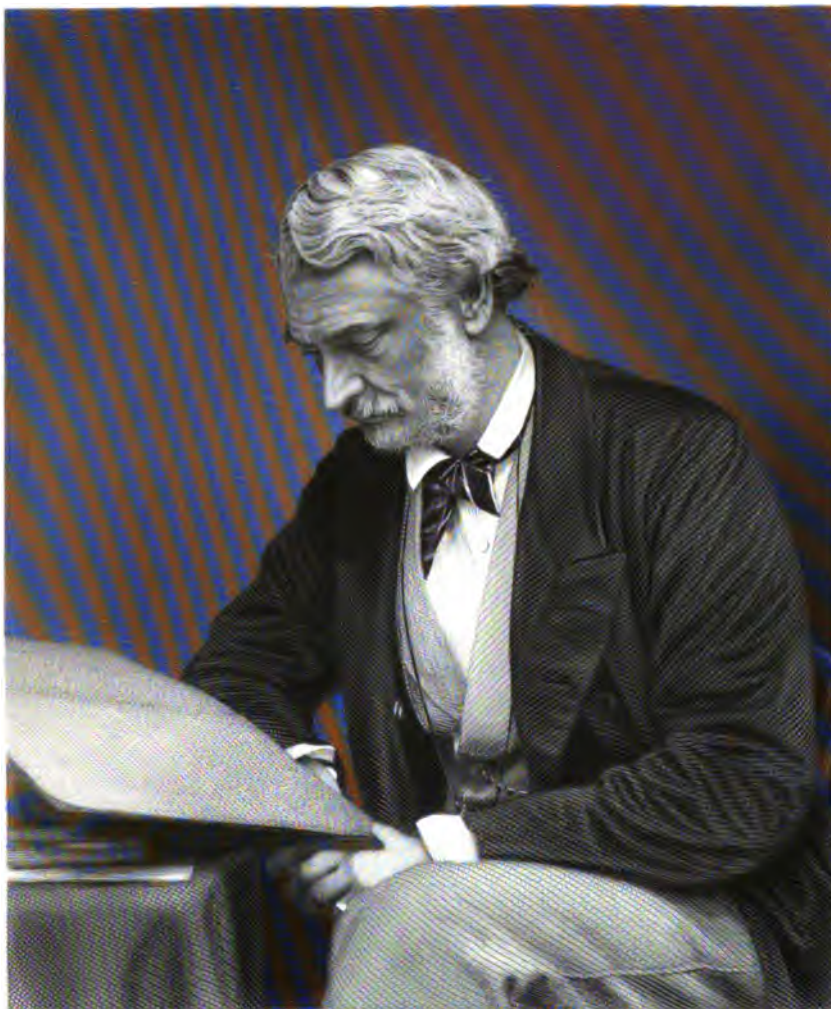
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the sanctity of a long tradition, yet sympathizing with authority, and full of conciliation, even deference, to the civil power. Broadly and deeply planted in the land, mixed up with all our manners and customs, one of the main guarantees of our local government, and therefore one of the prime securities of our common liberties, the Church of England is part of our history, part of our life, part of England itself.

"It is said sometimes that the Church of England is hostile to religious liberty. As well might it be said that the monarchy of England is adverse to political freedom. Both are institutions which insure liberty by securing order. It is said sometimes that the church in this country has proved unequal to its mission, and has failed to secure the spiritual culture of the population. It is perfectly true that within the last fifty years there has been a vast and irregular increase of our population, with which the machinery of the church has been inadequate to cope. But the machinery of the church, in that respect, was incomplete only; it was not obsolete. It is said that the church has lost the great towns; unhappily the church has never found the great towns. They are her future, and it will be in the great towns that the greatest triumphs of the church will be achieved; for the greater the population and the higher the education of the people, the more they will require a refined worship, a learned theology, an independent priesthood, and a sanctuary hallowed by the associations of historic ages.

"Here, then, is a common ground on which, dismissing unsubstantial and illusory feelings of perplexity, distrust, and discontent, all sections and parties of churchmen may unite and act together in maintaining the religious settlement of this realm. Is it unnecessary? Can any one now pretend that the union between church and state in this country is not assailed and endangered? It is assailed in the chief place of the realm, its parliament; and it

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is endangered in an assembly where, if churchmen were united, the church would be irresistible. Nothing can exceed the preparation, the perseverance, the ability, and, I will willingly admit, the conscience with which the assault upon the church is now conducted in the House of Commons. Churchmen would do wrong to treat lightly these efforts, because they believe that they are only the action of a minority in the country. The history of success is the history of minorities. During the last session of parliament alone a series of bills was introduced, all with various specific objects, but all converging to the same point—an attack upon the authority of the church and the most precious privileges of churchmen. Our charities are assailed; even our churchyards are invaded; our law of marriage is to be altered; our public worship, to use the language of our opponents, is to be 'facilitated.' Finally, the sacred fabrics of the church are no longer to be considered national. It is true that all these efforts were defeated. But how defeated? By a strain upon the vigilance and energy of those who repelled the attack, which cannot be counted on hereafter, unless churchmen, and the country generally, come forward to assist us."

Mr. Disraeli then alluded to the contested question as to the maintenance or abolition of church-rates. "My opinions on church-rates are well known," he continued. "I hold that the carrying of a measure for the total and unconditional abolition of church-rates would be a signal blow to the alliance between church and state, and that under no conceivable circumstances—at least, under no circumstances that I can conceive—should it be conceded. But there is a general opinion that legislation on the subject of church-rates is necessary and desirable, and that, without any relinquishment of principle, the law may be improved and adapted to existing circumstances. Be it so; only this I would venture to impress most earnestly on all churchmen who may be present—and perhaps I may presume to

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say, on some who are not here—that if there is to be legislation on church-rates, none can be satisfactory which is not introduced with the authority of Her Majesty's government. Sure I am that no member of parliament, whether he sits in the Lords or the Commons, can with his own resources and on his own responsibility succeed in such an enterprise. It would lead only to renewed defeat and increased disaster. The subject is at present in that position that the government of this country is most happily placed in regard to it, if it wishes to legislate. One-half of the House of Commons sitting opposite to them will support any just measure, waiving any points of difference on matters of detail among themselves; and therefore it is in the power of the government to secure a large majority on the subject. I think myself, on the whole, that it is now their duty to deal with it. The question of church-rates is the great domestic question of the day, and it ought not to be left in the position which it now occupies, after what has occurred in the two houses of parliament of late years. The very fact that opinion in the House of Commons as against the government is equally divided, and that in the other house of parliament there is an overwhelming majority against any rash and unconditional change, indicates that it is the duty of those who are responsible for the good government of the country to come forward, and with all the authority of an administration to offer their opinion on the question and to act upon it.

"I would venture, my lord bishop, to ask your permission to offer one observation on this subject, which I hope those churchmen who minister to us in things sacred will not think presumptuous. I am myself, I need hardly say, in public life a party man. I am not unaware of the errors and excesses which occasionally occur in party conflicts, but I have a profound conviction that in this country the best security for purity of government and for public liberty is to be found in the organized emulation of public

men. Nevertheless, I have ever impressed on my clerical friends the wisdom of the utmost reserve on their part with regard to mere political questions. Not that I doubt their right to entertain opinions on all public questions, and to act upon them. An English clergyman is an English gentleman and an English citizen. But I have always felt that in proportion to their political activity will the integrity of their spiritual and social influence be diminished; and I think that influence of far greater importance than their political activity. But there is a limit to this reserve. What I would presume to recommend is this:—When institutions are in question, and not individuals, the clergy ought to interfere; and when, of all institutions, that to which they are specially devoted, and on which their daily thoughts and nightly meditations should be fixed, is at stake, their utmost vigilance and determination should be summoned. When the interests of the church, of which they are the sacred ministers, are concerned, the clergy would be guilty of indefensible apathy if they remained silent and idle. The clergy of the Church of England have at this moment one of the greatest and most glorious opportunities for accomplishing a great public service that was probably ever offered to any body of public men. It is in their power to determine and to insure that church questions in this country shall no longer be party questions. They, and they alone, can effect this immense result, and that by a simple process—I mean by being united. Let them upon general public affairs entertain that which I trust they always will entertain as free Englishmen, their own general opinions. Let them be banded in the two great historical parties in the state, Whig or Tory. It would be a very unfortunate thing for this country, if in any great body of respectable men there should ever cease to be such differences of political opinion. But let them say that church questions are not questions which they will permit to enter the province of

political party. If the clergy are united in that determination, rest assured that the laity will soon become united too, and we shall be spared hereafter the frightful anomaly of seeing conscientious churchmen recording their votes and exerting their influence against the church. Depend upon it that nothing in this country can resist churchmen when united; and if they are only united on church questions, they will add immensely to the strength of good government and to the general welfare of the people. Then I believe that these admirable institutions, the object of which is to ameliorate the whole body of society, will assume that character in their action which is so devoutly to be desired; then the great aims of the church, the education of the people, their perfect spiritual supervision, the completion of our parochial system, and above all, the free and decorous worship of the Almighty, will be securely effected."

Before the end of the year a terrible blow fell upon the nation, and saddened all who were preparing to enter into the festivities of Christmas. At midnight on the Saturday of December 14, 1861, the great bell of St. Paul's sent forth its loud and lugubrious peals upon the silence of a hushed and sleeping city. Prince Albert, the great and the good, whom certain critics maligned in his life-time only to find at a later period how hard and unjust had been their strictures, had fallen a victim to a somewhat sudden attack of fever. He had been seized with cold and aguish symptoms, but it was not until the third day of his illness that either the court or the country began to experience any grave anxiety at his condition. From that date, however, his decline was rapid, his vital power became daily weaker; and on congestion of the lungs, the result of complete exhaustion, setting in, he sank without pain, and was conscious to the last. We are only now beginning to know how severe was the loss both the throne and the nation suffered by the death of the Prince Consort. A man

who wore the white flower of a blameless life, he set the court an example of purity of conduct such as it had never witnessed since the accession of the Hanoverian house. He interested himself in all matters calculated to advance the moral and intellectual welfare of the nation of his adoption. His mind was singularly clear; and the deductions he arrived at from his firm and complete grasp of public affairs were almost always sound and accurate. That one so gifted with the prescience and the capacity which mark the man who is born to guide and control, should have interfered so seldom in the conduct of public affairs is the best proof we have of his high moral worth and noble self-abnegation. Pure of life, a splendid example of behaviour amid great temptations and under somewhat trying circumstances, endowed with intellectual powers of no ordinary calibre, a man noble, disinterested, and prudently energetic, he passed into the tomb honoured and regretted by all; and as the records of his past life become more and more patent, so will the more his name and memory be held in esteem and veneration. Of all the men who have wielded the sceptre of English rule, or who have been closely allied to the throne, he alone deserves to be called "the Good."

"It has been said," remarked Mr. Disraeli (February 6, 1862) in the funeral oration he delivered upon the Prince Consort at the conclusion of his speech on the address to the throne, "it has been said that there is nothing which England so much appreciates as the fulfilment of duty. The prince whom we have lost not only was eminent for the fulfilment of duty, but it was the fulfilment of the highest duty under the most difficult circumstances. Prince Albert was the consort of his sovereign; he was the father of one who might be his sovereign; he was the prime councillor of a realm, the political constitution of which did not even recognize his political existence. Yet under these circumstances, so difficult and so delicate, he elevated even the throne by the dignity

and purity of his domestic life. He framed and partly accomplished a scheme of education for the heir of England which proved how completely its august projector had contemplated the office of an English king. In the affairs of state, while his serene spirit and his elevated position bore him above all the possible bias of our party life, he showed on every occasion all the resources, all the prudence, all the sagacity of an experienced and responsible statesman.

"Sir, I have presumed to touch upon three instances in which there was on the part of Prince Albert a fulfilment of duty—duty of the highest character, under circumstances of the greatest difficulty. I will venture to touch upon another point in his character equally distinguished by fulfilment of duty, but in which the duty was not only fulfilled, but was created. Although when he was adopted by this country he was, after all, but a youth of tender years, such was the character of his mind—at once observing and contemplative—that in due season he discovered that, notwithstanding all those great achievements which long centuries of internal concord and public liberty had permitted the energy and enterprise of Englishmen to achieve, there was still a great deficiency in our national character, which, if neglected, might lead to the impairing not only of our social happiness, but even of the sources of our public wealth. That was a deficiency of culture. But he was not satisfied with detecting a want, he resolved to supply it. His plans were deeply laid; they were maturely prepared; and notwithstanding the obstacles which he inevitably encountered, I am prepared to say they were eminently successful. What might have been his lot had his term completed that which is ordained as the average life of man, it might be presumption to predict. Perhaps he would have impressed upon his age not only his character, but his name. But this, at least, posterity must admit, that he heightened the intellectual and moral standard of this country; that he extended and expanded the

sympathies of classes; and that he most beneficially and intimately adapted to the productive powers of England the inexhaustible resources of science and art.

"Sir, it is sometimes deplored by those who admired and loved him, that he was thwarted occasionally in his undertakings, and that he was not duly appreciated. But these are not circumstances for regret, but for congratulation. They prove the leading and original mind which has so long and so advantageously laboured for this country. Had he not encountered these obstacles, had he not been subject to this occasional distrust and misconception, it would only have shown that he was a man of ordinary mould and temper. Those who improve must change, those who change must necessarily disturb and alarm men's prejudices. What he had to encounter was only a demonstration that he was a man superior to his age, and therefore admirably adapted for the work of progress.

"There is one other point, and one only, on which I will presume for a moment to dwell, and it is not for the sake of you, sir, or those who now hear me, or of the generation to which we belong, but it is that those who come after us may not misunderstand the nature of this illustrious man. Prince Albert was not a mere patron; he was not one of those who by their gold or by their smiles reward excellence or stimulate exertion. His contributions to the cause of state were far more powerful and far more precious. He gave to it his thought, his time, his toil; he gave to it his life. On both sides and in all parts of the House I see many gentlemen who occasionally have acted with the Prince at those council boards, where they conferred and consulted upon the great undertakings with which he was connected. I ask them, without fear of a denial, whether he was not the leading spirit, whether his was not the mind which foresaw the difficulty, his not the resources which supplied the remedy; whether his was not the courage which sustained them under apparently overpowering difficulties;

whether every one who worked with him did not feel that he was the real originator of those plans of improvement which they assisted in carrying into effect.

"But what avail these words? This House to-night has been asked to condole with the crown upon this great calamity. No easy office. To condole, in general, is the office of those who, without the pale of sorrow, still feel for the sorrowing. But in this instance the country is as heart-stricken as its queen. Yet in the mutual sensibility of a sovereign and a people there is something ennobling—something which elevates the spirit beyond the level of mere earthly sorrow. The counties, the cities, and the corporations of the realm—those illustrious associations of learning and science, and art and skill, of which he was the brightest ornament and the inspiring spirit, have bowed before the throne. It does not become the parliament of the country to be silent. The expression of our feelings may be late, but even in that lateness may be observed some propriety. To-night the two Houses sanction the expression of the public sorrow, and ratify, as it were, the record of a nation's woe."

The new year opened amid much gloom and depression. Trade was bad; the civil war in America created considerable distress in the cotton districts of Lancashire; and as yet the decision of the government at Washington concerning the *Trent* affair had not reached London. Parliament was opened by commission February 6, 1862, and as was to be expected, tender reference was made to the affliction in which the queen was involved by the loss of the Prince Consort. "It has been, however," said the commissioners, "soothing to Her Majesty, while suffering most acutely under this awful dispensation of Providence, to receive from all classes of her subjects the most cordial assurance of their sympathy with her sorrow, as well as their appreciation of the noble character of him, the greatness of whose loss to Her Majesty and to the nation is so justly and so universally felt

and lamented." The speech also referred to the satisfactory settlement of the difference with the United States regarding the seizure of the Confederate commissioners, the news of which had been received within the last three weeks; and to the convention concluded with France for the purpose of obtaining from Mexico a redress for grievances inflicted on foreign residents within that country.\* Measures were also promised relating to the improvement of the law.

On the meeting of the Houses, Mr Disraeli briefly commented upon the speech of the commissioners and the political situation of the hour. Although the general condition of affairs, he said, was one pregnant with anxiety, yet he hoped, with the exercise of vigilance and moderation in their councils, all perils and anxieties might be avoided. The march of events in America had been momentous. Nothing, however, had occurred so far to shake his conviction of the wisdom of the policy of neutrality which the English government had adopted. The conduct of ministers with respect to the matter of the

\* A long series of injuries to British subjects and property in Mexico, for which no redress could be obtained, led to the withdrawal of the British legation from the city of Mexico. The civil war that had been raging there for the last three years, between the revolutionary party under Generals Zuloaga and Miramon and the constitutional government under President Juarez, was made the excuse for not complying with the British demands. In 1842 a convention was concluded by the British minister with the Mexican government, for the payment of certain claims, by virtue of which a fixed proportion of the entire customs revenue was mortgaged as a security for payment. No money, however, being paid, a sub-convention was concluded in 1852, for the fulfilment of these claims. Great difficulties arose in carrying out these conventions, while outrages of the most flagrant kind continued to take place both to the persons and property of British subjects. In April Sir C. Lennox Wyke was sent as a special envoy to Mexico; but all his efforts were abortive, and it was necessary to resort to sterner means of compulsion. The governments of France and Spain had also serious grounds of complaint against the Mexican government, for wrongs and outrages inflicted on their subjects; accordingly the above convention was signed. It resolved to despatch combined naval and military forces, of sufficient strength to seize and occupy the several fortresses and military positions on the Mexican coast. The contracting parties were not to seek any acquisition of territory, nor to exercise in the internal affairs of Mexico any influence of a nature to prejudice the right of the Mexican nation to choose the form of its government. A commissioner was to be named by each of the contracting parties, to determine all questions regarding the application or distribution of money which might be recovered from Mexico.

*Trent* had been prompt, firm, and moderate, and he was bound in fairness to admit that the reparation America had offered had been influenced by sentiments as worthy. "When I consider," he said with that chivalrous generosity which was always so conspicuous in his character, and which is so wanting in his great rival, "when I consider the great difficulties which the statesmen of North America have to encounter, when I consider what I may call the awful emergency which they have been summoned suddenly to meet, and which without giving any opinion upon the cause of these transactions, I would venture to say they have met manfully and courageously, I think it becomes England in dealing with the government of the United States, to extend to all which they say at least a generous interpretation, and to their acts a liberal construction."

At the same time, he admitted, England had also a right to expect from the government of the United States that they should take no perverse view of the conduct of ministers in this country. England was now neutral, but how long such neutrality would last time alone could show. In an instance of intestine dissension, a neutral power must contemplate a term to such disorders; but whether that term should be accomplished by vindicating the authority of the legitimate government or by recognizing the existence of the insurrectionary power, was an event which time and circumstances alone could settle. All that the government of the United States had a right to expect was that England would take no steps in a precipitate spirit; and he therefore suggested that all information in the possession of the government with respect to the blockade of the Southern ports should be laid before the House. Mr. Disraeli concluded by pressing upon the government and the country that the expedition to Mexico should not be rashly undertaken, and then delivered the eulogium upon the late Prince Consort which we have already given.

The chief feature of this somewhat uneventful session was the financial statement

laid before the House by the chancellor of the exchequer. A large surplus had not been expected. The civil war in America was now beginning to act prejudicially upon our commercial interests; and if it had not been for the counterbalancing influence of the treaty with France, trade prospects in this country would have had but a sorry outlook. During the first quarter of the year our exports to the United States had fallen from £21,667,000 to £9,058,000, being a difference of no less than £12,609,000. On the other hand, our trade with France had increased within the period of a single year from £2,190,000 to £6,910,000. Still financial matters were not highly encouraging; numbers of men were out of work, the importation of cotton from America had almost ceased, and loud were the cries for relief from famished Wigan, Blackburn, and Preston. The crops in the last harvest had partially failed, and the nation had to settle various important little bills consequent upon an increase in our naval and military expenditure. Under these circumstances, it was not anticipated that Mr. Gladstone would have a large sum at his disposal to remit taxation and redress financial grievances. Nor were these expectations disproved when the budget came before the House; indeed matters were worse than had been anticipated. On making up the national account, Mr. Gladstone found that practically there was no surplus at his disposal.\* Under these circumstances, and

\* The following were the chief features in this budget:—The expenditure of the last year had been estimated at £69,875,000; but in addition there had been supplementary grants to the amount of £1,499,000, which brought up the total estimated expenditure to £71,374,000. The actual expenditure of the year was £70,888,000, being £586,000 less than the total estimated expenditure. Compared with the year 1860-61, the expenditure of which was £72,504,000, the decrease in 1861-62 was £166,000. The revenue of the past year amounted to £69,674,000, leaving a deficiency of revenue to meet the expenditure of £1,164,000. Deducting this sum from the amount of the supplemental grants, £1,499,000, there resulted a surplus of £335,000. The expenditure for the coming year, 1862-63, was estimated at £70,040,000, and the revenue at £70,190,000, leaving a surplus of £150,000. Mr. Gladstone was careful to state that comparing the revenue of the last year with that of 1861-62, the country had parted with three important sources of revenue, of which a loss of £2,687,000 had been entailed.

with the civil war in America likely to continue, the chancellor of the exchequer was unable to attempt any brilliant financial operations. He contented himself therefore with making a few changes in the incidence of taxation, such as the replacement of the duties on hops by an increase of brewers' licenses, a lowering of the duty on hops, and a modification of the wine duties.

Such a balance-sheet did not fail to encounter opposition; and it was warmly assailed by Mr. Disraeli in a critical and combative speech (April 7, 1862). They were commencing the year, he said, without a surplus, and under circumstances which could not be justified. Their trade was not increasing, their revenue was declining, and the state of affairs in America and Europe was not encouraging. It was therefore much to be regretted that the financial year should commence with only a nominal surplus. Why was there not a surplus? was on the lips of every one in the country. Had the paper duty been retained there would have been a surplus of nearly £1,500,000; the repeal of that duty had been opposed on two grounds—because there was no real surplus, and because owing to the civil war in America it was more than probable that there would have to be an increase in the naval and military expenditure of the country. The result had been that the civil war had created an increase in the national expenditure exceeding the amount of the paper duty. Mr. Disraeli then proceeded to criticise Mr. Gladstone's various financial statements, proving that his estimates were fallacious, that he had anticipated the resources of the country, and that his expenditure had been grossly extravagant. The chancellor of the exchequer, he said, had sustained the revenue by war-duties, he had supplied his deficits by reckless draughts upon the balances of the exchequer, and he had increased the public debt.

"Well, sir," concluded Mr. Disraeli, "having placed clearly before the House

and the country our exact financial position—our deficits, our anticipated resources, and the prospects before us—I say that I have shown that the three excuses which were offered by the right hon. gentleman to account for and extenuate his errors and calm the public mind, very naturally agitated after such a revelation, are utterly flimsy; the expenditure is not exceptional, the debt has not been reduced, retrenchment has not been effected. What if there be a continued decline of the revenue? What if there be that which the right hon. gentleman contemplates—a great increase in the employment of the people? What if there be that which every gentleman in this House on either side contemplates as more than possible—critical circumstances occurring either in America or Europe which may call for increased expenditure—where are we? Where is our surplus to fall back upon? The abolition of the paper duty was wrung from a reluctant House of Commons, and in defiance of the solemn vote of the other house of parliament. Whatever may be the folly of ministers, history may vindicate the wisdom of parliament. But, sir, there is a point more alarming even than increased taxation, or than even that account of his financial disasters which could no longer be concealed. The whole speech of the right hon. gentleman, where he referred to taxation, seemed based on this principle—that the income tax was to be a permanent feature of our financial system. The right hon. gentleman referred to half a dozen other taxes which he could not yet repeal, and to some which he could only soften. The whole tenor of the discourse of the right hon. gentleman was, that the income tax was to be a permanent feature of our financial system. Is that the opinion of the House of Commons? Is that the opinion of the country? I reiterate the views that I have myself often expressed. I do not believe that the income tax in its present form can be a permanent tax. Although I have listened to every suggestion

that has been made, and weighed them, I trust, with patience and without partiality, I have listened to no scientific solution of the difficulties connected with that tax that would be satisfactory to the treasury of Her Majesty. The tax remains unequal, unjust, inquisitorial, and branded with that character of infamy which the right hon. gentleman himself in 1853, with such profuse expression, gave to it, and which he made the basis of his most considerable financial measure and his most fallacious.\*

"Sir, I think we have a right to expect from the right hon. gentleman that he should speak frankly on this subject of the income tax. He has no right to fritter away the resources of the country, and leave that tax pressing upon it. Sir, there is something in the speeches of the right hon. gentleman on this head, and generally on all matters of finance—it is of common custom with him, and I feel it my duty now to notice it—which fills me with perplexity, which I think conveys to the country a sentiment not merely of perplexity, but of distrust; and it is this, that while the right hon. gentleman is without exception the most profuse minister that ever administered the affairs of this country in peace, he is perpetually insinuating—to use the mildest term—to the House and the country that he disapproves of that expenditure, and is burning to denounce it. Now, that is not a legitimate position for the right hon. gentleman to occupy. If he disapproves of this profuse expenditure, why does he sit upon that bench, and lend to its enactment and enforcement all the authority

of his character and all the lustre of his reputation? If, on the contrary, he approves of that expenditure, then it is his duty as finance minister especially, not to dispirit and discontent the people, but rather to animate them under inevitable burdens, and sustain their courage at a time when he perhaps might have to call upon them with renewed appeals. But nothing of the kind; the right hon. gentleman never proposes a vote—and it falls to him to propose the most profuse votes that any minister in time of peace ever brought forward—he never does this without an intimation that he does not sanction in his heart the expenditure he recommends. But the right hon. gentleman has gained the confidence and support of a party in this House, not yet very numerous in point of number, but distinguished by talent and perseverance—the party who are for the reduction of our establishments. How is it that that party who preach retrenchment and reduction—who believe all our estimates, especially the naval and military estimates, are much too extravagant, who are opposed to fortifications, and who do not much like iron ships—how is it that this party always support a minister who is bringing forward these excessive estimates and who provides for this enormous expenditure?

"Well, that is a great question. This, at least, we know—that while the spendthrift is weeping over pence, while this penurious prodigal is proposing this enormous expenditure, he always contrives to repeal some tax to gratify the interests or prejudices of the party of retrenchment. No wonder, then, we hear no longer the same character of the income tax. No wonder we are no longer reminded of that compact entered into by the House and accepted by the country for its gradual and permanent abolition. Unless the House expresses on a fitting occasion its opinion, there is very little hope of our obtaining any redress in this respect. Well, sir, who will deny that this position

\* "If the committee have followed me, they will see that we stand on the principle that the income tax ought to be marked as a temporary measure; that the public feeling that relief should be given to intelligence and skill, as compared with property, ought to be met, and may be met; that the income tax in its operation ought to be mitigated by every rational means compatible with its integrity; and, above all, that it should be associated in the last terms of its existence, as it was in its first, with those remissions of indirect taxation which have so greatly redounded to the profit of this country, and have set so admirable an example—an example that has already in some quarters proved contagious—to the other nations of the earth."—*Mr. Gladstone House of Commons, April 18, 1853.*

of affairs is peculiar and perilous? I remember some years ago, when the right hon. gentleman was at the head of a small and select party of politicians, not then absorbed in the gulf of Liberalism, that we heard much prattle about political morality. What then most distinguished the right hon. gentleman and his friends was their monopoly of that admirable quality. They were perpetually thanking God that they were not as other men, and always pointing their fingers at those unfortunate wights who sat opposite to them. Now we see the end of 'political morality.' We see the position to which 'political morality' has brought the finances of a great nation. I denounce this system as one detrimental to the character of public men, and most injurious to the fortunes of the realm."

So much praise has been lavished upon the lucid and skilful manner in which Mr. Gladstone manipulated his earlier budgets that it sounds like treason to call in question, not their brilliancy, but their soundness. Yet there can be little doubt that the financial policy of Mr. Gladstone at this period was far from deserving the reputation it gained. Fortunately for him, however, the mistakes were concealed by the dazzle of his eloquence. "A great rhetorician," said Mr. Disraeli, "when he makes a comprehensive statement, may so charm his audience that when they are leaving the House they may be utterly ignorant as to whether a surplus or a deficiency really exists. But in the sober hour that follows the financial flourishes, there is a power of appeal to documents, the accuracy of which cannot be impugned, and from which we can draw conclusions which no one can for a moment hesitate to accept." And the sober hour that followed the financial flourishes of Mr. Gladstone showed how superficial and erroneous were many of his statements. Mr. Gladstone had asserted that throughout the whole period of his financial policy the growth of the revenue and the growth of public prosperity had been due to remis-

sions of taxation; yet it was proved that in other countries, where there had been no remissions of taxation and no new commercial policy, the increase of prosperity had been more rapid than in England. Between the years 1846 and 1856 the exports had increased only 96 per cent.; whilst in Austria they had increased 124, and in France 159 per cent.—thus showing that the increase of wealth, which not only England but other nations had enjoyed for the last fifteen years, must be attributed to another cause than a revised commercial policy. Again, during the last eight years, there had only been two years in which there had been a surplus, whilst the deficiency during that period was nearly thirty-four millions. Since the beginning of the Crimean war there had been an addition of nearly thirty-two millions to the capital of the national debt, and an increase of almost a million in the annual charge. Then Mr. Gladstone had also taken an unsound and one-sided view of the success which had attended upon the commercial treaty with France. He had raised the income tax from 5*d.* to 9*d.*, and had thus gained an additional four millions. "By the help of that four millions," said Lord Robert Cecil, "Mr. Gladstone no doubt enabled a large number of persons to set up a profitable trade, and those persons very naturally were loud in their panegyrics of the success of his commercial policy, the French treaty. What Mr. Gladstone had done was this. He had said to all the holders of fixed incomes—to curates, clerks, farmers, and all who were not engaged in trading operations—'You shall pay 4*d.* in the pound more than you have paid me before, and with that money I will enable certain estimable people in a great number of the commercial towns of England to open trade which they would never have been able to do before.' " If money was taken from one interest and given to another, the latter would of course be very prosperous, and that was all that Mr. Gladstone's commercial policy had achieved. The sounder class of economists,



and they sat chiefly on the Conservative benches, were on the whole not unjustified in declaring that they viewed the system of finance adopted by Mr. Gladstone with fear and distrust.

Once more the question of the abolition of church-rates, which had been defeated last session by the casting vote of the Speaker, came before the House, and was again rejected, though by the narrowest majority that victory could possibly obtain. The debate on the second reading took place May 14, 1862, when Mr. Disraeli offered a few remarks.

"The question," he said, "had occupied the attention of parliament for nearly thirty years, and though twenty-three schemes had been brought forward for its solution, the matter was still unsettled. And why? Because the question was not ripe for legislation, and the country did not really require it to be dealt with. No doubt, when they were dealing with an ancient law and an ancient custom, there must be many abuses which might be removed, and many improvements of which it was susceptible. So it might be said of the question of church-rates. Doubtless in the appropriation of the sums levied by church-rates there were appropriations which could not be altogether justified, and in other cases appropriations which were of too limited and exclusive a character. But who could suppose that if those were the abuses and grievances which required a remedy, the House of Commons, the most practical assembly in the world, would have wasted thirty hours, and made twenty-three legislative experiments, and yet never advanced a single jot towards the solution of the difficulty? The question could only be settled by the government taking it in hand. It was not a clerical question, but a popular question, since it involved the public rights of the people. It was not to be decided by the weight of the opinion of prelates, but by statesmen. They had at stake some of the greatest objects, and some of the most important principles which

could engage the attention of Englishmen. They had at stake the principle of an established church, the practice of local government, the right of self-taxation, and the hereditary privileges of the great mass of the population. That leads us," concluded Mr. Disraeli, "to the mode in which this church-rate has really been levied. It has been levied by popular election. It has been imposed by the popular voice, expressed in the ancient and constitutional manner of this country by a majority. Why, the principle of ruling by a majority is the moving spring of our social and political life, and upon it the remarkable order of this country mainly depends. Why, if it is a grievance for a minority in a parish to submit to a majority, under what grievance does a member of the minority of a constituency labour who sees returned to this House a gentleman who is in mockery called his representative, with whom he does not agree upon any single public question, and who is passing all his time in opposing those views and principles which the unhappy constituent advocates? Why might not he come to us and say—'Here is a political grievance which touches me every hour of my life, which makes me feel degraded and enslaved, and I ask for some relief in these particulars. This monstrous proposition that my borough is to be represented by the opinion of the majority is, in fact, an obstacle to all sound principles of government; and if this rule of a majority is adhered to, those ideas, which I am convinced are the only ones upon which beneficial legislation can rest, will not have the slightest chance of successful assertion.' What would you say to a person who addressed you in that manner? You would say—'All this may be very well; but the fact is society could not be carried on upon your principles.'"

On a division the supporters of church-rates triumphed; Ayes, 286; Noes, 287—majority, 1.

The condition of the finances of the country was viewed, as we have seen,

by the Conservative party with distrust. Owing to the fears, chiefly excited by Lord Palmerston, that there was a prospect of an invasion by France, large sums had been spent upon fortifying our coasts, upon the construction of iron ships, which had now become a prominent feature in our nautical armament, and upon other defences of the country. It was felt both by Conservatives and by certain Liberals that the occasion did not justify this lavish outlay, that the country was well supplied with means of defence, and that the money granted by the House of Commons could be expended more beneficially in the remission of taxation than in keeping our armaments at a war level. Upon the motion of Mr. Stansfeld, "that, in the opinion of this House, the national expenditure is capable of reduction without compromising the safety, the independence, or the legitimate influence of the country," Mr. Disraeli made use of it as a means to attack the government upon its extravagance. Ever since the date of the treaty of Zurich Mr. Disraeli had been urging upon the government "to counsel disarmament by France, and for the general exercise of our influence for reduction on that subject;" and he now complained that his advice had been neglected.

The home defences, he said (June 3, 1862), considering the House had been ten years engaged upon them, were now perfectly sufficient for the object they had in view, and it was needless to expend further sums upon them. The militia had been embodied, the channel fleet had been established, the volunteer system had sprung up, and the country had the regular troops armed with Enfield rifles, and the artillery provided with Armstrong guns. In short, they had at home a force of nearly 400,000 men disciplined and used to arms. "I say," said the leader of the Opposition, eulogizing, as he always did, the courage and loyalty of the English nation, "I say it is a monstrous mistake for a moment to suppose that this

country is not adequately defended; and I say that there is no country in the world, so far as artificial arrangements are concerned, more secure than England. And what is this country that you have so properly guarded and protected? Is it a country without any spirit of its own? Is it like some other countries where the government is mere police, where there is no public opinion, no public spirit, nothing of the inspiration of ancient freedom, no strength and resources but those of the government itself? Why, sir, that minister is unworthy of governing this country, who forgets for a moment that the people of England are the most enthusiastic people in the world. There are more excitable people to be met with—the French, for example, are far more excitable; but there is no people so enthusiastic as the English, as they have shown, among other instances, in this very question of national defence. To say of this country, protected by 400,000 men and a commanding fleet in the channel, that we are in danger of midnight invasion from cordial allies is a mystification too monstrous for belief."

Mr. Disraeli then showed that as at home we were well defended, so in all our principal stations throughout the world we were represented by an adequate armed force. Our foreign garrisons were efficient, our fortifications strong, our armaments complete, our troops numerous, and in our great naval stations—the Mediterranean and the West Indies—we had commanding fleets which secured the supremacy of the sea. Why then, he asked, spend any more sums, why increase the national expenditure by making unnecessarily efficient what was already perfectly satisfactory? Why expend a large amount on our naval and military establishments for purposes which were not necessary for the security of our shores, and for the protection of our interests and influence abroad? Nothing, he cried, justified such extravagant and extraordinary expenditure. Europe was tranquil because she was exhausted and embarrassed.

Where was Austrian finance? Where was Russian finance? What was the financial condition of that imperial France who was thrown in their face as a bugbear on all occasions? Why, during the last fifteen years, Europe had been in arms, and she was now consequently exhausted and impoverished. These were times for economy and retrenchment, not for increased armaments and extravagance. It was idle to lament over the expenditure of the past, but with continuous deficits it behoved England to be careful as to the future. What the government ought now to do, he suggested, was to make such reductions as would equalize the charge and revenue of the country, and the policy intimated should be a diminution in the war taxation which, used in time of peace, was sapping and wasting their financial reserve—that reserve which was the secret source of their influence with foreign nations, and the best security for their prosperity at home.

To the resolution of Mr. Stansfeld the following amendment had been proposed by Lord Palmerston:—"That this House, deeply impressed with the necessity of economy in every department of the state, is at the same time mindful of its obligation to provide for the security of the country at home and the protection of its interests abroad: That this House observes with satisfaction the decrease which has already been effected in the national expenditure, and trusts that such further diminution may be made therein as the future state of things may warrant." To Lord Palmerston's substitute Mr. Walpole had proposed this amendment, "and trusts that the attention of the government will be earnestly directed to the accomplishment of such farther reduction, due regard being had to the defence of the country, as may not only equalize the revenue and the expenditure, but may also afford the means of diminishing the burden of those taxes which are confessedly of a temporary and exceptional character." At a meeting of the Opposition at Lord Derby's house, in St. James' Square, it had

been unanimously resolved to support the resolution of Mr. Walpole. Lord Palmerston, however, frustrated the tactics of the Opposition by treating Mr. Walpole's amendment as a vote of want of confidence. Mr. Walpole refused to engage in the discussion on these terms, and withdrew his amendment, causing Mr. Disraeli (it was on the eve of the Derby) to describe him as "a Derby favourite who had bolted." Mr. Stansfeld's resolution was rejected by 367 to 65, and that of Lord Palmerston was then carried without a division.

Before the session closed Mr. Disraeli availed himself of another opportunity to attack the financial policy of the chancellor of the exchequer, and further to expose his extravagance and shortcomings. Mr. Cobden, almost on the last day of the session, had passed in review the administration of affairs by the government of Lord Palmerston. His criticism was keen and not flattering. What were, he asked, the principles of the Liberal party? They were economy, non-intervention, and reform; and yet Lord Palmerston had acted throughout in defiance of those three great principles. His government had been the most extravagant the country had ever known in times of peace, and compared most unfavourably with the late Conservative ministry. The prime minister had dismissed the question of reform; and instead of non-intervention he had meddled in almost every quarter of the globe. "Taking into account," remarked the great apostle of free trade, "Lord Palmerston's Afghan wars, his Chinese wars, his Persian war, his expeditions here, there, and everywhere . . . the least I can put the noble lord down as having cost the country must be £100,000,000 sterling. I think," quietly observed Mr. Cobden, "the noble lord with all his merits is very dear at such a price."

To these strictures Lord Palmerston briefly replied. Reform, he said in his jaunty way, had not been dealt with because it was distasteful to the House of Commons and to the general feeling of the constituencies, and

because the proceedings of Mr. Bright had tended considerably to wean the people from the subject. He denied that his administration had been extravagant; and as to the views entertained by Mr. Cobden, they would not be supported by the country. Nor could he consider in any other light than as a compliment the censure of Mr. Cobden upon the foreign policy of the cabinet.

Then Mr. Disraeli rose, and he was in his most caustic vein. As the leading counsel, he began (August 1, 1862), in the great controversy between the Liberal party and the Reform government had stated their case, it would not perhaps be presumptuous on his part to exercise judicial authority, and offer some remarks by way of summing up on the merits of the question. He was not surprised at Mr. Cobden having felt it his duty to call the attention of the country to the relation that subsisted between the Liberal party and the government which they had created. He had expected some such criticism. As for himself he was content with the present position of the Liberal party. He had no desire whatever to interfere with that gradual, but at the same time sufficiently rapid process of decomposition and demoralization that he had long watched—the inevitable consequence of the circumstances and conditions under which the present administration had been formed, by the influence and authority and votes of that self-same Liberal party. The government had been formed for two purposes, most distinct and most direct. It was to pass a more democratic reform bill than had been proposed by its predecessors; and it was to extricate the country from the dangerous position in which its predecessors had placed it in relation to France. Those were most distinct conditions. And yet no reform bill of any kind had been carried. Why? because, sneered the prime minister, neither the House nor the country was particularly anxious for it.

"Is this the language," cried Mr. Disraeli, "we have a right to expect from a statesman of unprecedented experience, of one who is supposed not to act upon very grave matters but after due and deep reflection; a statesman, we assume, gifted with a fine observation of the temper of the times, and actuated by some sense of that responsibility which—though the House, as we are told to-night, may be broken up into fragments and manipulated by a dexterous parliamentary tactician—by a responsibility which I still hope influences the conduct of a British minister? Why, sir, what were the antecedents of the noble lord on this question of reform? A measure for the reconstruction of this House was brought forward by the late government, and it was opposed by the noble lord because it was not sufficiently comprehensive and sufficiently democratic. Animated by that conviction and influenced by that feeling, the noble lord felt himself authorized to counsel a course and join in a vote which he knew would lead to the dissolution of the existing parliament. Parliament was dissolved, the opinion of the country was given . . . and after that verdict of the country had been taken, after the dissolution which he had forced, after the public judgment of the people had been offered for his consideration, the noble lord entered into a confederacy, attending a public meeting in a public place, and made terms with the leaders of those convenient sections which are now to be managed in violation of the traditions and spirit of the English constitution, and there and then entered into an engagement to bring forward a more democratic reform bill than their predecessors whom he had defeated. And is it to be tolerated now that he should come forward with these jests, with this frivolous levity, and tell the parties whom he has deluded, and the people in the country whom he has disappointed, that, after such grave conduct, with such an opportunity of forming an opinion, he finds that neither the par-

liament which had just been elected, nor the people whom he had just left, really cared anything at all about parliamentary reform, and treats it as one of those manœuvres by which a minister who does not rule a party contrives to get a majority?"

Mr. Disraeli then turned to the policy of the government with regard to foreign affairs. The Conservatives had been turned out of office, because Lord Palmerston had declared that war with France was imminent in consequence of the short-sighted and prejudiced manner in which the interests of Austria had been upheld by the cabinet. Yet how, he asked, did Lord Palmerston act immediately upon being restored to power? "He rose in that seat," said Mr. Disraeli in tones of just indignation, "which he had gained by pledging himself to a measure of democratic reform—he rose in that seat and said that with regard to foreign policy the course of his government had been chalked out by their predecessors, and that course they intended to follow!"

So much for the reform bill, the rejection of which, laughed Mr. Disraeli, he for one certainly did not regret; and so much for the Liberal foreign policy! The next important question they had to consider was the state of the finances. "Are our finances," asked Mr. Disraeli, "in that state of prosperity or in that satisfactory condition, that we should reconcile ourselves to the government of the noble lord, even if he behaved so badly to his own party?" He thought not. Never since the year 1840 had the finances of England been in a more critical state. They had now what they had in 1840—two large and continuous deficits. They had begun the year without a surplus, and all that had since occurred went to prove that they must contemplate a third deficiency. The country had spent many millions without any compensation in the shape of an efficient expenditure and the results of that efficient expenditure. The money had been lavished on useless objects,

and shamefully wasted on unnecessary fortifications, on needless foreign expeditions, and on dockyards which showed no results. Such had been the Liberal policy; and yet what had been the policy of the Conservative party?

"I will at least say for the gentlemen who sit on this side of the House," answered Mr. Disraeli, "that the past session is a session upon which they have no reason as a party to look back with regret. We have, in the first place, this session, after long years of difficulty and sometimes almost of despair, triumphantly vindicated the status of the Church of England. There are few great things left, but among them is the church. We have done this in a manner, too, most satisfactory, because we have done it by parliamentary discipline—by parliamentary discipline founded on its only sure basis, sympathizing public opinion. I think we have done more. Ever since that period of disaster and dismay, when my friends and myself were asked for the first time to sit upon these benches, it has ever been our habit, in counselling the Tory party, to recur gradually but most sincerely to the original elements of that great political connection. To build up a community, not upon Liberal opinions, which any man may fashion to his fancy, but upon popular principles, which assert equal rights civil and religious; to uphold the institutions of the country because they are the embodiment of the wants and wishes of the nation and protect us alike from individual tyranny and popular outrage; equally to resist democracy and oligarchy, and favour that principle of free aristocracy which is the only basis and security for constitutional government; to be vigilant to guard and prompt to vindicate the honour of the country, but to hold aloof from that turbulent diplomacy which only distracts the mind of a people from internal improvement; to lighten taxation; frugally but wisely to administer the public treasure; to favour popular education, because it is the

best guarantee for public order; to defend local government and to be as jealous of the rights of the working man as of the prerogative of the crown and the privileges of the senate—these were once the principles which regulated Tory statesmen, and I for one have no wish that the Tory party should ever be in power unless they practise them.”

Parliament was prorogued by commission a few days after this discussion. If the labours of the session had been arduous, their results were certainly not very apparent. The Houses were informed that the relations between England and the foreign powers were friendly and satisfactory; that Her Majesty, having resolved at the outset of the American civil war to take no part in the contest, had “seen no reason to depart from the neutrality to which she has steadily adhered;” and that a commercial treaty had been concluded with Belgium. The supplies had been liberal, and the dockyards and arsenals had been placed in a permanent state of defence. A treaty had been concluded with the president of the United States for the suppression of slavery; an Act for rendering more easy the transfer of land had been passed; and on the pages of the statute-book had also been enrolled statutes for the better regulation of parochial assessments, for the better administration of the highways, for establishing a uniformity of weights and measures, for amending the poor laws, and for the better regulation of merchant shipping. Mr. Cobden had not diverged far from the truth when he said that, to obtain these results it was hardly worth while to have upset a Conservative government.

Mr. Disraeli passed the autumn at Hughenden, and it was not until the close of the year that he again came prominently before the public. His action both in the House of Commons and in the country, as one of the most uncompromising opponents of the abolition of church-rates, had caused him to be regarded as the most valued

defender of the rights of the establishment that the national church then possessed. Of the Church of England Mr. Disraeli was always a staunch adherent. In his views of church discipline he was liberal and tolerant; but he was rigid in his interpretation of where the line of demarcation should be drawn. He agreed that a national church should be built on a broad basis, but he did not hold that its breadth should be of such a character as to be supported on one side by Deism and on the other by Romanism. The church might be broad, but it was to be distinctive. He could understand a man being a sceptic, a deist, or an agnostic; but he failed to understand either the honour or the logic of the Anglican divine who, whilst daily repeating the beautiful prayers of the Church of England and reading the appointed lessons, yet denied the inspiration of Holy Writ, threw doubts upon the Atonement, and gave to Plato a credence and a reverence which he denied to the Redeemer of mankind. Every man was at liberty to profess what form of faith he pleased; but if he enrolled himself as a member of the Church of England, he was in honour bound to accept her teaching and conform to her discipline. He could understand the position of the Catholic, and some of the most eloquent passages in his speeches and in his works are upon the power, the antiquity, and the ceremonial splendour of the Church of Rome; but he had scant sympathy with the mock priest and mischievous citizen who, forgetful of his ordination vows, sought to introduce a bastard superstition into the church he had solemnly vowed to maintain pure and uncorrupt; who with the diligence of the antiquary ferreted out obsolete observances which he pledged himself to uphold, whilst he calmly ignored what was patent in every rubric, obedience to his bishop; who, the pretended disciple of authority, passed his own laws and declined to admit the validity of any other legislation; who sneered at the civil power when it clashed with his own peculiar form of

discipline, yet eagerly claimed its assistance when it suited his purpose to avail himself of any advantage it might possess; and who, when at last made to suffer the lenient punishment of the law, posed before an admiring following of sickly women and shopkeepers' assistants as a martyr, smarting under the agonies of a Ridley or a Latimer for the faith. Such buffooneries Mr. Disraeli held in the contempt they deserved, and in his Public Worship Regulation Act he sought to restore uniformity to the national church, and to put down "mass in masquerade." But of the Church of England as by law established—in intimate union with the State, the church of the laity as well as of the clergy, her priests carrying out in all conscientiousness the law they had sworn to obey—Mr. Disraeli was a warm and fond disciple. He wished her to continue, pure and undefiled, working for the good of the nation, protected by the state, and in return making the state religious, as her founders had desired and decreed. There were few great things left, he said, but among them *was* the church.

Towards the end of the year (October 30, 1862), Mr. Disraeli addressed a large meeting held at High Wycombe, in aid of the Oxford Diocesan Society for the augmentation of small livings. He took this opportunity to express his views as to the future of the Church of England. He considered the remuneration offered to those who embraced holy orders as disgraceful, and as a grave reflection upon the nation. He touched upon the spoliation the church had suffered. He discussed the relations between the church and the country, and foretold the results which must ensue from a separation between church and state. He explained how the nationality of the church could be asserted, and what was the course to be pursued towards those not within her communion. He began by alluding to the poverty of the church, and we shall give his words, with but little excision or condensation, since they bear as much upon the condition of

the Church of England at the present day as upon her condition twenty years ago.

"It is not surprising," he said, "that the Church of England should be a poor church, because the church in this country has been despoiled. That is not a fate peculiar to the Church of England. Other churches, too, have been despoiled; but there is a peculiarity with regard to our church in this matter. In other countries, when the church has been deprived by the state of its property, at least that property has been applied to public and national purposes. That has not been the case of the church in England. The property of the church in England has been granted by despots and tyrants to their minions, and has been made the foundation and establishment of powerful families, who by virtue of that property, and not from any public services of their own, have had for generations a great portion of the government of this country, and of its power and patronage. Well, I find in these circumstances of aggravation in the case of the spoliation of the church in this country, compared with the spoliation of churches in other countries, circumstances of consolation and hope, because we live in an age when communities are governed by the influence of opinion; and when individuals are regulated in their conduct to a great degree by the influence of conscience, I cannot but believe that the estimable descendants of those original appropriators of church property, when they learn (and in a country of free discussion like the present they must now all of them be well informed upon that subject) that men of the highest education, who, from a sense of duty and devotion, dedicate their lives to comforting the people, receive for their labours stipends which even menials would refuse—I cannot but believe the estimable descendants of those original appropriators, in the satiety of their splendour, must feel an impulse that will make them apply a portion of that property, ages ago thus unjustly obtained, to purposes of a character which

society would recognize, and by its approbation reward."

Yet he felt there was little hope of any large action on the part of the class to which he had referred, or of any great exertion being made by the laity and the church generally, unless the church herself took a more definite and determined position than she had occupied during the last five-and-twenty years. "During that period," continued Mr. Disraeli, "there has been a degree of perplexity and of hesitation—I will say even of inconsistency—in the relations between the church and the nation, that has damped the ardour and depressed the energies of churchmen. I think it is not difficult to indicate the probable cause of that conduct; and it is only by ascertaining it that we can perhaps supply the remedy which may remove those injurious consequences. Society in this country is now established upon the principle of civil and religious liberty; and, in my opinion, it is impossible—and if possible, not desirable—to resist the complete development of that principle. At the same time, you have a church established by law, that is to say, a national church; and there is an apparent inconsistency in the principle which you have adopted as the foundation of your social system, and the existence of that established church; because the principle of civil and religious liberty has placed legislative power in the hands of great bodies of the people who are not in communion with that church, and they have used that power during the last five-and-twenty years, with caution at first, with much deliberation at first, but as time advanced, with more boldness and with more energy, till within the last few years they have made an avowed attack upon that church—an attack which they have conducted with great ability and with great courage. That being the case, you have what has occurred during the last quarter of a century; you have an apparent want of sympathy between that which, by the constitution, is the national church and a

great portion of the nation; a state of affairs which is to be highly deprecated.

"Twenty years ago, when this inconvenience was first generally felt, ardent churchmen, as sincere churchmen as ever lived, thought they had found a solution of this difficulty by terminating the union between church and state. They said, 'Terminate the union between church and state, as the whole of the nation is no longer in communion with the church, and you will put an end to the dissatisfaction that partially, but to a considerable degree, prevails.' That, no doubt, is a very plausible suggestion, and one that has been accepted by ingenuous and able minds; but if it is examined into, it will be found one that may lead to results very different from those which are anticipated by the persons who are favourable to it, and results perhaps unsatisfactory and injurious to the country; because it cannot be supposed for a moment," said Mr. Disraeli, and the Ritualists would do well to take his words to heart, "that in this age the civil power will tolerate an *imperium in imperio*, and allow a great corporation, in possession of vast property—for the property is considerable, though, if distributed, it may not offer adequate compensation to those who are labouring in its service—to act in independence of the state. Therefore, there is no concealing it from ourselves that it would soon end in another spoliation, and the church would be left without the endowment of the estates which it at present possesses. The principles of divine truth, I admit, do not depend upon property; but the circulation of the principles of divine truth by human machinery depends upon property for its organization. And there is no doubt that, deprived of the means by which the divine instruction which it affords to the people is secured the church would of course lose immensely in its efficiency.

"But in the case of the Church of England," he continued, "it is not merely the question of the loss of its property,



but it is also a question of the peculiar character of that property. The property of the Church of England is territorial. It is so distributed throughout the country that it makes that church, from the very nature of its tenure, a national church; and the power of the Church of England does not depend merely on the amount of property it possesses, but in a very great degree on the character and kind of that property. Then, I say, the result would be that the church, deprived of its status, would become merely an episcopal sect in this country; and, in time, it is not impossible it might become an insignificant one. But that is not the whole, or perhaps even the greatest evil that might arise from the dissolution of the connection between church and state, because in the present age the art of government becomes every day more difficult, and no government will allow a principle so powerful as the religious principle to be divorced from the influences by which it regulates the affairs of a country. What would happen? Why, it is very obvious what would happen. The state of England would take care, after the church was spoiled, to enlist in its service what are called the ministers of all religions. The ministers of all religions would be salaried by the state, and the consequences of the dissolution of the alliance between church and state would be one equally disastrous to the churchman and to the nonconformist. It would place the ministers of all spiritual influences under the control of the civil power, and it would in reality effect a revolution in the national character. In my opinion, it would have even a most injurious effect upon the liberties of the country; and I cannot believe that after the thought and discussion that have been devoted to the subject for now the twenty years since it was first mooted by ardent and sincere men, I cannot believe there can be among those who have well considered it, any great difference of opinion, but that all men—I would say the churchman, the dissenter, the philosopher

—would shrink from a solution of the difficulty by such means.

“Well, then, what would you do? I maintain that you have only one alternative; that if you do not favour a dissolution of the union of church and state, you must assert the nationality of the Church of England. I know it will be said, ‘Assert the nationality of the church in a nation where there are millions not in communion with the church?’ These are words easy to use; but practically, what would be the consequence of a mere phrase? Well, I think that is a point worthy of some grave consideration; and in the first place it is expedient to ascertain, What is the character of those—I will acknowledge it—millions who are not in communion with the church? They consist of two classes. They consist of those who dissent from the church, and of those who are indifferent to the church; but these classes are very unequally divided.

“Now, the history of English dissent will always be a memorable chapter in the history of the country. It displays many of those virtues—I would say most of those virtues—for which the English character is distinguished—earnestness, courage, devotion, conscience; but one thing is quite clear, that in the present day the causes which originally created dissent no longer exist; while, which is of still more importance, there are now causes in existence opposed to the spread of dissent. I will not refer to the fact that many, I believe the great majority, of the families of the descendants of the original Puritans and Presbyterians have merged in the Church of England itself; but no man can any longer conceal from himself that the tendency of this age is, not that all creeds and churches and consistories should combine—I do not say *that*, mind—but I do say, that the tendency of the present age is that all churches, creeds, and consistories should cease hereafter from any internecine hostility. That is a tendency which it is impossible for

them to resist; and therefore, so far as the spread of dissent, of mere sincere religious dissent, is concerned, I hold that it is of a very limited character, and there is nothing in the existence of it which should prevent the Church of England from asserting her nationality. For observe, the same difficulties that are experienced by the church are also experienced by the dissenters, without the advantage which the church possesses in her discipline, learning, and tradition.

"But I come now to the more important consideration; I come to the second division of the English population that is not in communion with the Church of England. And here I acknowledge that at first the difficulty seems great, because here you do count them by millions; but, in the first place, observe that these are not dissenters from the church; these are not millions who have quitted the church. There are great masses of the population who have never yet entered into communion with the Church of England. The late archbishop of Canterbury (Dr. Sumner), a most amiable and pious man, and by no means deficient in observation of the times, passed many of his last years in anxious perplexity about the anomalous position of that national church of which he was the primate. I was a member of a committee formed of members of the two houses of parliament, who had to confer together upon the conduct to be pursued in the Houses of Lords and Commons by the friends of the church, upon some momentous questions in which the interests and the character of the church were concerned. The archbishop of Canterbury was our chairman, and in every instance when we had to confer together, the late archbishop always counselled surrender, and surrender without conditions. Fortunately, there were other opinions upon that committee, and I am glad to say, that in every instance the late archbishop of Canterbury was outvoted. It so happened that in all these cases, when they were brought before the

houses of parliament for decision, it was proved that the opinion of the archbishop had been erroneous, and that he had miscalculated the feeling in favour of the church which existed in the country, because the decision of the houses of parliament, and especially the House of Commons, is only a reflection upon such subjects of the feeling of the country. The year before the archbishop died, he did me the honour of seeking a conversation with me, and the object of that conversation was to explain the course he had taken with regard to these questions, in which he admitted that, so far as recent occurrences were concerned, he had been mistaken; but he said, 'Although I may have formed an erroneous judgment, and although I admit you and your friends were right in your view of the case, still I went upon a great fact. My conduct was based upon a great fact, which no one can deny, and it is this—No one can deny that the population has outgrown the church.' No one can deny that. I do not deny it; but I draw from that fact a conclusion exactly opposite to that of the late archbishop of Canterbury. My inference is the very reverse of the one which he drew, and the conduct which he consequently recommended.

"If, indeed, the Church of England were in the same state as the pagan religion was in the time of Constantine; if her altars were paling before the divine splendour of inspired shrines, it might be well, indeed, for the church and for the ministers of the church, to consider the course that they should pursue; but nothing of the kind is the case. You have to deal, so far as regards the millions who are not in communion with the church, and whom I will describe, distinguishing them from the dissenters, as those who are indifferent to the church—you are dealing with millions of the English people. And who are the English people? The English people are, without exception, the most enthusiastic people in the world. There are more

excitable races. The French, the Italians, are much more excitable; but for deep and fervid feeling, there is no race in the world at all equal to the English. And what is the subject, of all others, upon which the English people have been most enthusiastic? Religion. The notes on the gamut of their feeling are few, but they are deep. Industry, Liberty, Religion, form the solemn scale. Industry, Liberty, Religion—that is the history of England. Now, upon these three subjects they have periods of exaltation. They have had periods of deep feeling within our own experience, alike with regard to toil and with regard to freedom; and it is not impossible, nay, I would not hesitate to say, there may be many in this room who may witness a period of exaltation in the public mind of the country, and especially among these millions, with regard to religion, that has certainly not been equalled in our times, or in the times of our fathers. But what an opportunity is that for a church! When great bodies of the nation, who have never been in communion with the church, have their minds, their feelings, and their passions, all exalted in the direction of religion, and influenced by the religious principle, what an opportunity for a church, with her learning, her organization, and the ineffable influences of her tradition, with her sacred services, with her divine offices, with all the beauty of holiness in which she worships, to advance and address them! What an immense field for any church! But what a field for a corporation which is not merely a church, but which is the Church of England; blending with divine instruction the sentiment of patriotism, and announcing herself, not only as the Church of God, but as the Church of the Country! I say that, with these views, instead of supposing that the relations which exist between a large body of our fellow-subjects and the church—relations at this moment of indifference and even of alienation—are causes why the church should not assert her nationality, they are causes and

circumstances which peculiarly call upon the church to exert herself; and to prepare for a coming future which will demand her utmost energies, as I believe it will yield her greatest rewards. . . .

“Well, then, if I am to consider what are the means by which the nationality of the church may be asserted, I say certainly, in the first place—it is hardly necessary for me to say that—the church should educate the people. But though we have lived during the last quarter of a century in times not very favourable to the church; though the church has gone through great trials during that period, and has trials even at the present moment, not merely from its avowed enemies, still I think the church may congratulate herself upon the whole on what she has accomplished in the education of the people. It is possible that the means which have been at the command of the church may be reduced. It is possible that there may be fresh assaults and attacks upon the machinery by which the state has assisted the church in that great effort; but I think that no impartial man can shut his eyes to the conviction that the Church of England during the last five-and-twenty years has obtained a command over the education of the people, which fifty years ago could not have been contemplated, and so much having been done, we have no right to believe that the command will be diminished. On the contrary, whatever may be the conduct of the state, I express my belief that the influence of the church over the education of the people will increase. Well, so far, on that head, the result is favourable.

“There is another important means by which the nationality of the church may be, in my opinion, asserted. It is one on which there is controversy; but it is only by controversy that truth is elicited and established. I am in favour, not of any wild, indiscriminate, or rashly-adopted, but, on the contrary, of a moderate and well-considered extension of the episcopate. And I form my opinion upon the advant-

ages that would arise from an extension of that character, from the consequences of the extension of the episcopate to our colonies, which have been signal, and, to a certain degree, upon the consequences that have resulted from the establishment of the two new dioceses in England. In the diocese of Ripon, I think, the effects have been very considerable. More might have been done in the diocese of Manchester, where the occasion was golden; but something has been gained, and at least we have the consolation of hoping that a glorious future there awaits us.

"Then there is a third means and measure by which, I think, the nationality of the Church of England may be asserted; and that is by a further development of the lay element in the administration of affairs which are not of a spiritual character. We must erase from the mind of the country the idea that the Church of England is a clerical corporation, of which the clerical element, however important, is only a small element; and except—a great exception no doubt—the ministering to us in sacred things, there is nothing that concerns the church in which it is not alike the privilege and the duty of laymen to take an active part. Now, I believe, if such a prudent development of the lay element in the management of the affairs of the church takes place, you will have a third great means of asserting the nationality of the church.

"There is a fourth measure, which is, in my mind, of great importance, and that is the maintenance of the parochial system. Unfortunately in this country, so far as the church is concerned, very erroneous ideas exist upon the subject of our parochial constitution. In consequence of the great changes that have taken place of late years with regard to parochial administration,—as, for example, mainly in the poor law and in some other measures,—there is a too general idea that the parochial constitution has been subverted; but so far as the church is concerned, the parochial constitution is complete and

inviolable. It is not in any degree affected by any of those changes, and the right of visitation, both by the parishioner and the parish priest, remains intact, and if properly acted upon, is a source of immense and increasing influence, especially in those large towns of which we hear so much, and where the right is now considered as not even in existence.

"The fifth means by which the nationality of the church may be asserted brings me closely to this resolution; and I mention it last, not because I think it inferior in importance to any of those which have preceded it. You must render your clergy more efficient, whether in the great towns you increase the staff of curates, which perhaps is more advantageous than building churches without making preparations for their maintenance, and still less for their endowment; or whether you avail yourselves of those means which other societies in this diocese for the increase of spiritual assistance afford; or whether, lastly and chiefly, you take the great subject in hand which has brought us together to-day, and make an effort throughout the country for putting an end to those low stipends which are now almost in mockery appended to the discharge of laborious parochial duties. I can say from my own experience, what I have no doubt many gentlemen in this room can confirm, that in innumerable cases at this moment the clergyman of the Church of England, devoting his life, his health, the fruits of a refined education, to the service of God and the comforting of the people, is not only not remunerated, but is absolutely, by his contributions to local and parochial objects and institutions, out of pocket at the end of the year in the parish which he serves.

"Well, these are five great practical means by which the nationality of the church may be asserted. Still they are but means and machinery, and they must be inspired by that spirit of zeal and devotion which alone can insure success, and which alone deserve success; but in the present state

of this country, after the analysis of its population which I have presumed to sketch to-day, I say that a great corporation like the Church of England, where the clergy and laity act in union, may look forward by means of measures such as I have now mentioned under these five heads, to great, triumphant, and final success.

"There is only one other topic upon which I will make a remark before I conclude. It will be observed that the five measures which I have ventured to recommend, with one exception, can be adopted by the church without any appeal to the legislature—a great advantage; and in the exceptional instance, namely, that which refers to the extension of the episcopate, if an application were made to the legislature, couched with the discretion becoming the subject, I have little doubt it would be successful. We must not shut our eyes to this fact, that the time has gone by when we could ask for new powers and privileges from parliament to establish the position of the Church of England. That time is gone. I myself do not undervalue a public recognition of the church by the legislature of the country. I think its importance is great, perhaps cannot be over-estimated. I believe that in its action it gives the church an authority with many minds which, without that position, she would not possess or exercise. It is because we believe that a public recognition of the nationality of the church by the constitution is of that great value, that I, and others who have acted with me in that behalf, have resisted all those attacks which during the last few years in parliament have been directed at the privileges and the public status of the church. We have so acted, because we believed that public

status would give the church an immense advantage when the opportunity offered of asserting her nationality. If we had not believed such would be the consequence, we should have declined contending for privileges which would otherwise be obsolete, and for a public status that was barren. But because we thought that, when the hour arrived for a great effort in the church—and I think that hour has arrived—a public recognition by the ancient constitution of the country of her national status would be of immense advantage, and give it great vantage-ground, we made those efforts and entered into that struggle. I would venture to hope that this meeting to-day may be of some use; I will venture to hope that the effort of this diocese will be great, and that it will not be confined to this diocese. I hope we shall be no longer appalled and paralyzed by indefinite estimates of the hostility and the obstacles we have to encounter. I hope, above all, that those faint-hearted among our brethren, who seem to me of late years only to be considering how they could decorously relinquish a position of great responsibility, will learn that the wisest course with regard to the Church of England, as with regard to all other cases in which a great duty is involved, is to be courageous, and endeavour to perform that duty. Then I am confident that this Church of England will show to the world that it has powers of renovation which have not been suspected by some. For my own part, I uphold it, not merely because it is the sanctuary of divine truth, but because I verily believe it is our best security for that civil and religious liberty of which we hear so much, and which we are told is opposed to its institution."

## CHAPTER XIX.

### CHURCH MATTERS.

THE political outlook still continued gloomy and depressing. On all sides there were disturbing influences, the developments of which it became difficult to determine. The civil war in America was still raging with all the fury and bitterness characteristic of fratricidal strife, and by its interruption of commerce with this country had plunged Lancashire in the deepest misery.\* Differences of opinion had soon appeared among the allied English, French, and Spaniards as to the object of the expedition to Mexico, and at last France had been left to prosecute the enterprise alone, with what fatal results we shall have occasion subsequently to relate. Garibaldi was busy with his inflammatory proclamations, creating disturbances in Sicily. A revolt against the English had broken out in Japan, and Mr. Richardson, of the British embassy, had been murdered. Disputes had arisen between Denmark and Germany. Earl Russell (Lord John had been raised to the peerage in 1861) had recommended the Danish Government to give to Holstein and Lauenburg all that the Germanic

\* "It appeared that at the end of the last week in January, 1868, the guardians of 147 Unions in the manufacturing districts were affording relief to the amount of £15,612, which was distributed among 221,045 persons. From the Relief Fund during the same week the sum of £39,474 was expended in the relief of 374,630 persons. The total relief was therefore £55,086, which was distributed among 595,675 persons. The total contributions from all sources — the spontaneous contributions of the people of the United Kingdom, of the colonies, and of foreign countries up to the end of January, amounted to the large sum of £760,692. It was quite true that the cotton operatives had been slightly better employed of late, but he [Mr. Bazley] feared there was no possibility of any improvement at present to any great extent. He regretted, too, that the distress was increasing to a lamentable extent among the class of small tradesmen, and other classes, who had not hitherto received assistance from the Relief Fund. The fact was, that for the last two years a large portion of the people of the manufacturing districts had been living upon their capital." — *Mr. Bazley, House of Commons, February 5, 1868.*

Confederation had demanded on their behalf, and to assure to Schleswig self-government, advice which Denmark refused to follow. In Prussia, the king, imitating the example of our first Charles, had closed the session, and had announced his intention of governing independently of the constitution, by declaring 'the government of his Majesty as under the necessity of controlling the public affairs outside the constitution.' Greece was in confusion; an insurrection had broken out against the fat and foolish Otho; a provisional government had been formed, which announced the overthrow of the old dynasty and the beginning of a new administration. To prevent bloodshed, Otho issued a manifesto, stating that he would quit the kingdom; and accordingly he embarked on board a British man-of-war. Subsequently the national assembly of Greece declared the throne vacant, and announced that Prince Alfred of England had been elected king. The prince was proclaimed sovereign of Greece, but was not permitted, according to the treaty of 1832, to accept the crown. At the instigation of France, England and Russia were invited to join in French intervention in North America; Russia declined to interfere, and England decided upon maintaining her past neutrality. Diplomacy was occupied in writing despatches as to the conditions under which the Ionian Islands would be ceded to Greece. Oppressed Poland had once more risen to shake off the iron yoke of Muscovite rule. The immediate cause of the outbreak was a pitiless system of conscription by Russia, which, having been abolished by the Emperor Nicholas, was now revived in the most oppressive form.

It was carried into effect not by drawing lots, but by selecting the most active and enterprising inhabitants of the cities. In fact it was a design, as Lord Napier said, to make a clean sweep of the revolutionary youth of Poland. When it was first threatened, a secret body called the Central Committee issued clandestine publications to the people, urging them to resistance. On the commencement of the conscription 2500 men were carried off, and immediately thousands of young men took flight. The committee issued a manifesto, calling upon all to form themselves into armed bands and resist the tyranny of Russia. The flame of revolt burst forth in a variety of places, and soon Russian Poland was in one vast conspiracy against the government. In China the Taeping rebels were fighting against the emperor, and the arms of His Celestial Majesty were aided by England and France.

Such was the situation of affairs when the parliament of 1863 was opened by commission. The only bright feature in this catalogue of distress and agitation was the engagement of the Prince of Wales to the Princess Alexandra of Denmark, which the country hailed with delight, and the news of which acted not a little as a powerful counter-balance against the prevailing gloom and depression. In the speech from the throne our domestic and foreign policy was commented upon, and the course we were to observe in the future. It ran as follows:—

“MY LORDS AND GENTLEMEN,

“Her Majesty commands us to inform you that, since you were last assembled, she has declared her consent to a marriage between His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales and Her Royal Highness the Princess Alexandra, daughter of Prince Christian of Denmark; and Her Majesty has concluded thereupon a treaty with the King of Denmark, which will be laid before you.

“The constant proofs which Her Majesty has received of your attachment to her person and family, persuade her that you will participate in her sentiments on an event so interesting to Her Majesty, and which, with the blessing of God,

will, she trusts, prove so conducive to the happiness of her family, and to the welfare of her people.

“Her Majesty doubts not that you will enable her to make provision for such an establishment as you may think suitable to the rank and dignity of the heir-apparent to the crown of these realms.

“A revolution having taken place in Greece, by which the throne of that kingdom has become vacant, the Greek nation have expressed the strongest desire that Her Majesty's son Prince Alfred should accept the Greek crown. This unsolicited and spontaneous manifestation of goodwill towards Her Majesty and her family, and of a due appreciation of the benefits conferred by the principles and practice of the British constitution, could not fail to be highly gratifying, and has been deeply felt by Her Majesty.

“But the diplomatic engagements of Her Majesty's crown, together with other weighty considerations, have prevented Her Majesty from yielding to this general wish of the Greek nation.

“Her Majesty trusts, however, that the same principles of choice which led the Greek nation to direct their thoughts, in the first instance, towards His Royal Highness Prince Alfred, may guide them to the selection of a sovereign under whose sway the kingdom of Greece may enjoy the blessings of internal prosperity, and of peaceful relations with other states; and if in such a state of things the Republic of the Seven Islands should declare a deliberate wish to be united to the kingdom of Greece, Her Majesty would be prepared to take such steps as may be necessary for a revision of the treaty of November, 1815, by which that Republic was reconstituted, and was placed under the protection of the British crown.

“Her Majesty's relations with Foreign Powers continue to be friendly and satisfactory.

“Her Majesty has abstained from taking any step with a view to induce a cessation of the conflict between the contending parties in the North American States, because it has not yet seemed to Her Majesty that any such overtures could be attended with a probability of success.

“Her Majesty has viewed with the deepest concern the desolating warfare which still rages in those regions; and she has witnessed with heartfelt grief the severe distress and suffering which that war has inflicted upon a large class of Her Majesty's subjects, but which have been borne by them with noble fortitude and with exemplary resignation. It is some consolation to Her Majesty to be led to hope that this suffering and this distress are rather diminishing than increasing, and that some revival of employ-

ment is beginning to take place in the manufacturing districts.

"It has been most gratifying to Her Majesty to witness the abundant generosity with which all classes of her subjects in all parts of her empire have contributed to relieve the wants of their suffering fellow-countrymen; and the liberality with which Her Majesty's colonial subjects have on this occasion given their aid has proved that, although their dwelling-places are far away, their hearts are still warm with unabated affection for the land of their fathers.

"The Relief Committees have superintended with constant and laborious attention the distribution of the funds intrusted to their charge.

"Her Majesty commands us to inform you that she has concluded with the King of the Belgians a Treaty of Commerce and Navigation, and a Convention respecting Joint-Stock Companies. That treaty and that convention will be laid before you.

"Her Majesty has likewise given directions that there shall be laid before you papers relating to the affairs of Italy, of Greece, and of Denmark, and that papers shall also be laid before you relating to occurrences which have lately taken place at Japan.

"GENTLEMEN OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS,

"Her Majesty has directed that the Estimates for the ensuing year shall be laid before you. They have been prepared with a due regard to economy, and will provide for such reductions of expenditure as have appeared consistent with the proper efficiency of the public service.

"MY LORDS AND GENTLEMEN,

"We are commanded by Her Majesty to inform you that, notwithstanding the continuance of the civil war in North America, the general commerce of the country during the past year has not sensibly diminished.

"The Treaty of Commerce which Her Majesty concluded with the Emperor of the French has already been productive of results highly advantageous to both the nations to which it applies; and the general state of the revenue, notwithstanding many unfavourable circumstances, has not been unsatisfactory.

"Her Majesty trusts that these results may be taken as proofs that the productive resources of the country are unimpaired.

"It has been gratifying to Her Majesty to observe the spirit of order which happily prevails throughout her dominions, and which is so essential an element in the well-being and prosperity of nations.

"Various measures of public usefulness and improvement will be submitted for your con-

sideration; and Her Majesty fervently prays that in all your deliberations the blessing of Almighty God may guide your counsels to the promotion of the welfare and happiness of her people."

It will be observed that in this speech no mention was made of any specific legislative projects; there was nothing said about reform, retrenchment, or future legislation, except the vague pledge that "various measures of public usefulness and improvement" would be laid before parliament. On the occasion of the debate on the address in the House of Lords the Prince of Wales for the first time took the oaths and his seat.

In the House of Commons the address was moved by Mr. Calthorpe and seconded by Mr. Bazley, and in the course of the debate, Mr. Disraeli (February 5, 1863) passed a searching and careful criticism upon the state of Europe and the policy of the government. The first topic which, however, attracted his attention was the happy announcement of the approaching marriage of the Prince of Wales. "I am sure," he said, "that there is no passage in the speech of the lord commissioners which will be received with more complete and more cordial sympathy by this House than that in which the persuasion is expressed, by the commands of Her Majesty, that this House will sympathize with the sentiments which Her Majesty feels on so interesting an event as the marriage of the heir-apparent of these realms. There was a time when royal marriages were the perplexity of politicians, and it was supposed that by the adroit negotiation of such transactions we might often control, and sometimes even change, the balance of power. Those times, happily, are for ever passed. But it would be, I am sure, a great error to believe that in a country like England, where happily the domestic affections are cherished and venerated, a royal marriage might not conduce greatly to the power and influence of a prince. We have seen in our time, and in this country, what may be the effect in



that respect of a royal alliance. Sir, his sovereign parent offers to His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales an example which, if followed, will, I am sure, endear him to the hearts of all Englishmen; and, sir, I am equally confident that at this moment he will not forget that other parent, whom a year ago, in this House, we met to mourn, who built up a royal hearth on the principle of household love, and who yet, by his refined and profound intelligence, elevated it above the majesty of thrones."

Mr. Disraeli then alluded to the terrible distress which had visited Lancashire, and to the generous efforts of the relief committee to abate its miseries. "When we remember," he said, alluding to the poverty-stricken operatives, "the fortitude with which they have endured that visitation, when we remember the spirit with which our suffering fellow-subjects have been sustained, I think there is, if I may so express it, some moral compensation for the material losses; and if it prove, as I hope and believe it may prove, that ultimately this trial may conduce to the sounder and more permanent prosperity of the community, I hope we may be justified in treating this great visitation rather as a misfortune than a calamity. Sir, I will not stop to panegyrize the conduct of any particular class. I will not offer now a needless, perhaps a fulsome tribute of admiration and approval, to any particular body of Her Majesty's subjects. What in this terrible trial is of good cheer for England, is the proof it has furnished of the mutual trust and the entire affection that subsist among all classes of Her Majesty's subjects, and which indicate, whatever may be our form of government, the existence of a real commonwealth." Then, by an easy transition, he passed on from the distress in Lancashire to the cause of that distress—the civil war across the Atlantic.

"I am bound to say," he continued, "that from the first, and subsequent events have only confirmed my conviction, I

have always looked upon the struggle in America in the light of a great revolution. Great revolutions, whatever may be their alleged causes, are not likely to be commenced or to be concluded with precipitation. Before the civil war commenced the United States were colonies, because we should not forget that such communities do not cease to be colonies because they are independent. They were not only colonies, but they were colonizing, and they existed under all the conditions of colonial life except that of mere political dependence. But even before the civil war I think that all impartial observers must have been convinced, that in that community there were smouldering elements which indicated the possibility of a change, and, perhaps, of a violent change. The immense increase of population; the still greater increase of wealth; the introduction of foreign races in large numbers as citizens, not brought up under the laws and customs which were adapted to a more limited, and practically a more homogeneous race; the character of the political constitution consequent, perhaps, on these circumstances; the absence of any theatre for the ambitious and refined intellects of the country, which deteriorated public spirit and lowered public morality; and, above all, the increasing influence of the United States upon the political fortunes of Europe—these were all circumstances which indicated the more than possibility that the mere colonial character of these communities might suddenly be violently subverted, and those imperial characteristics appear which seem to be the destiny of man. I cannot conceal from myself the conviction that, whoever in this House may be young enough to live to witness the ultimate consequences of this civil war, will see, whenever the waters have subsided, a different America from that which was known to our fathers, and even from that of which this generation has had so much experience. It will be an America of armies, of diplomacy, of rival states and manœuvring cabinets, of frequent turbu-

lence, and probably of frequent wars. With these views I have myself, during the last session, exerted whatever influence I might possess in endeavouring to dissuade my friends from embarrassing Her Majesty's government in that position of politic and dignified reserve which they appeared to me to have taken up on this question. It did not appear to me, looking at these transactions across the Atlantic, not as events of a mere casual character, but as being such as might probably influence, as the great French revolution influenced and is still influencing European affairs, that there was on our part due to the existing authorities in America a large measure of deference in the difficulties which they had to encounter. At the same time it was natural to feel, what I would not attempt to disguise, the greatest respect for those Southern states, who, representing a vast population of men, were struggling for some of the greatest objects of existence—*independence and power*. It appeared to me that the course which Her Majesty's government had apparently resolved upon was one which, on the whole, was honourable to this country, and would prove beneficial to all classes of the community.

"I was therefore surprised, and, individually speaking, somewhat mortified, when I found that in the course of the autumn Her Majesty's government commissioned one or two of their members to repair to the chief seats of industry in the country to announce, as I understood it, an entire change in the policy which they had throughout supported and sanctioned.\* It was not an accident; the declaration was made formally, and it was made avowedly with the sanction of the government. If that declaration meant anything, it meant that the Southern states would be recognized; because, if it be true that they

have created armies, navies, and a people, we are bound by every principle of policy and of public law to recognize their political existence. There appeared to me to be a great inconsistency in that declaration. I thought that a course of conduct was then recommended by the government, which nothing had occurred in the interval to justify. It is most inconvenient that, upon a subject of such importance, and upon which the government appeared from the first to have taken up a correct and dignified position, the government should have exhibited such contradictory conduct and such conflicting opinions, and that during the autumn they should have felt it their duty to communicate this vacillation of purpose and this inconsistency of judgment to the whole nation. At the commencement almost of the struggle we were told by one minister, who, above all, ought to be best informed on these topics, what, in the opinion of the government, were the motives of this civil war. We were told that on the part of the North there was a desire to establish dominion, and on the part of the South to achieve independence. It may have been discreet, perhaps, on the part of the government to make that public declaration of their opinion; but what are we to say of the subsequent definitions of this contest which have also been supplied by the government? It is only a fortnight since one of the cabinet ministers told us that the whole cause of this war was the existence of slavery, and he vigorously denounced that pestilent institution. What agreement is there, then, between the president of the board of trade and the foreign minister, who ought to be the greatest authority on matters of this character? What are we to say when one day we find an eminent member of the cabinet recommending the recognition of Southern independence, and the next day another equally important colleague telling us that none of the conditions on which independence should be recognized, exist in the South? These

\* In an after-dinner speech, at Newcastle, (October 7, 1862), Mr. Gladstone expressed it as his opinion, that Jefferson Davis had really succeeded in making the South an independent nation. Coming from a cabinet minister, at a time when neutrality was understood to be the policy of the government, the announcement caused considerable sensation.

varying opinions are so prevalent among the members of the government that only a day or two ago one of them, not yet admitted to the cabinet, but whose lips are steeped in the gravity of the privy council, told us that in the opinion of the government the 'Lord of Hosts was on the side of the Southern states.' I think it very much to be regretted that the government did not adhere to that reserve which distinguished them last session upon this great subject, and that it is much to be deprecated that, unless a change has taken place in their policy, there should not have been more silence during the recess as to their individual opinions."

Mr. Disraeli then proceeded with his sarcastic criticism. If the government, he said, had objected to interfere in the conflict between the Northern and Southern states, there had been no objection to meddle with other countries. So far as he could judge of the state of affairs, the cabinet had employed the autumn in interfering in almost every part of the world, except in America. The objection of ministers to interference was therefore not an abstract one. Papers in reference to Greece, Italy, and Denmark had been promised to be laid before the House, and he should say that on all those subjects papers were very necessary; they might throw some light upon transactions and communications which had certainly startled and perplexed the country during the parliamentary recess. Still there was one country respecting which papers had not been promised, and respecting which he wished to obtain some information. That country was China. He wanted to have a more precise idea of what their relations were with the Chinese than seemed to be in the possession of parliament. So far as he could judge, there was constant fighting going on in China, and that fighting appeared to be supported in a great degree by Englishmen. Indeed, during the autumn certain English officers had openly stated, and their statements had been supported by the government, that

they had been engaged by the Emperor of China to enlist their fellow-subjects to fight in the emperor's behalf—another Spanish legion in fact. Of this active interference Mr. Disraeli strongly disapproved. "There is then," he said, making an attack upon Lord Palmerston, "war in China. Officers in Her Majesty's service are enlisting British subjects, in order to interfere between the Emperor of China and his rebellious subjects; and I want to know whether that is a policy which this House approves, and whether they do not think it requires some explanation? Let me remind the House that about twenty-five years since our Chinese policy commenced. The noble lord, the present first minister, may be said to be its author. It began by attempting to put down the Tartar dynasty; and the noble lord, when informed by the late much-respected Sir James Graham,\* then a member of this House, that the population of China was very considerable—nearly half the population of the globe—and that it was not so very easy to put down a government commanding resources of such magnitude, said it was very true the population consisted of about 300,000,000, but half the population consisted of secret societies; that the great body of the subjects of the Emperor of China were discontented with his government, and he was confident they would have support, of which the House had no knowledge; the government was well informed, and the House might depend upon it, the war would be successful. The war was successful; it was successful in developing ever since these secret societies, which have taken other names familiar to the House. Twenty-five years have elapsed, and the noble lord who made war against the Tartar dynasty is now supporting the Tartar dynasty and making war against these rebellious subjects of the Emperor of China. We have completely changed our position. We are making war against the Taeping insurrection. There has been a great controversy in this House

\* He died October 24, 1861.

as to the origin of the insurrection. Who are the Taepings? What are the Taepings? I maintain that we have nothing to do with the Taepings. Whether they are patriots, or whether they are brigands, is nothing to the people of England. The status of the Taepings is a question for China, not for England: and if we attempt now in this illegitimate and round about manner to support the Tartar dynasty, we shall ultimately be involved in another Chinese war for a different object and on a different side from that which we have hitherto taken. I say it is a matter of great importance, at a moment when we hear for the first time of a reduction of public expenditure, that we should not get involved again in a Chinese war."

He rejoiced to hear that there was to be the reduction in the public expenditure he had always advocated; but he sincerely trusted that such reduction would be effected by a policy which did not lead to expenditure, and not by a careless and hasty cutting down expenditure. His observations upon this point offered him another opportunity of girding at the foreign policy of Lord Palmerston. "We hear a great deal," he said, "of the frugal government of the Duke of Wellington.

\* The Emperor Taou-Kwang, who died February 25, 1860, during the latter part of his reign became liberal in his views, and favoured the introduction of European arts; but his son, the late emperor, a rash and narrow-minded prince, quickly departed from his father's wise policy, and adopted reactionary measures, particularly against English influence. An insurrection broke out in consequence, August, 1850, and quickly became of alarming importance. The insurgents at first proposed only to expel the Tartars; but in March, 1851, a pretender was announced among them, first by the name of Tien-teh (Celestial Virtue), but afterwards assuming other names. He announced himself as the restorer of the worship of the true God, Shang-ii, but derived many of his dogmas from the Bible. He declared himself to be the monarch of all beneath the sky, the true lord of China, the brother of Jesus, and the second son of God, and demanded universal submission. His followers were termed Taepings. The Taepings, who commenced hostilities against the Imperialists, met with considerable success, capturing Wuchang, January 12, 1853, and Nankin, March 19. Their operations, which seem to have been suspended during the war between France and England and China, were renewed in 1861, and they captured Ningpo, December 9. They were, however, defeated March 1, and May 3 and 21, 1862, and Ningpo was wrested from them. They were again defeated October 23 and 24, and in 1863 and 1864 they sustained so many reverses that their cause had become desperate. They were defeated with great loss in February, 1866.

The Duke of Wellington was not a prime minister who would have starved the army. The Duke of Wellington, it is well-known, had an equal admiration and feeling for the other branch of Her Majesty's service. It is quite clear the army and navy under the Duke of Wellington would be in an efficient and complete state. We are told that in those days we had not the empire which we now possess. We have some colonies which we did not possess in the days of the Duke of Wellington; but I believe that the colonial expenditure then was greater than it is now, because those considerable changes in the government of colonies, which have led to a reduction of expenditure, had not then been carried into effect. Therefore, the Duke of Wellington had a great army and navy to maintain, and our establishments abroad and our colonies, and yet was a frugal minister. Why was he a frugal minister? Because he did not follow a policy of intrigue; because his policy was a truly Conservative policy. It was not a policy of sensation. It was not a policy of surprise. Such a policy may suit continental nations, where public opinion only takes in the consideration of external affairs. Such a policy may suit new dynasties; but a diplomacy of intrigue and a policy of sensation and surprise are not necessary for a country like England, where liberty and industry occupy sufficiently the energies and minds of the people, and where we are blessed with a constitution deeply rooted in the convictions of the country and supported by the traditions of centuries. It is necessary clearly to understand this. Let it not be supposed that, because we advocate a frugal and economical administration of the public funds, we are opposed to an efficient state of the public service or the maintenance of those establishments abroad which are necessary to maintain our position; and let it be remembered that the inevitable result of a restless policy must be an expenditure very incompatible with the permanency of the reductions which are now promised us."

Mr. Disraeli then briefly touched upon the Schleswig Holstein question; the difficulty as to the residence of the Pope; the opposition of Lord Palmerston to the penetration of the isthmus of Suez; and the insurrection in Greece—questions which we shall have to discuss more fully when the papers relating to them come before the House. Controversies, he sneered, had often taken place with respect to the foreign policy of Lord Palmerston. Sometimes it was called spirited, and sometimes turbulent. Sometimes the noble lord was described as the incarnation of Liberalism, and at other times he was denounced as the ready tool of any despot—provided only the despot be powerful. As a matter of fact, the foreign policy of the prime minister was simply perplexing and inconsistent. Lord Palmerston objected to the construction of the Suez Canal, since it would endanger the integrity of the Turkish empire, and yet, by the proposed cession of the Ionian Isles to Greece, he was placing the Ottoman empire in far greater jeopardy, and practically reversing the policy which England had deliberately adopted. To the cession of these islands to the new sovereignty of Greece the Conservative party was strongly opposed. Our protectorate of the Ionian Islands was deemed most important in respect to the position of England in the Mediterranean and the Adriatic, and on account of the route to India by way of Egypt. The possession of Corfu alone, it had been said, was equal to the addition of two frigates to the English fleet. The Ionian Islands had been most serviceable during the Crimean war, and afforded the safest and best harbours in the Mediterranean. Handed over to a naval power which might one day be hostile to England, they might prove, it was contended, a source of great embarrassment to us. Upon this point Mr. Disraeli spoke at some length. He asserted that the views of those who regarded the right of England over the Ionian Islands as being merely a protectorate were entirely fallacious.

"This," he said, "is very dangerous ground to take; and I most earnestly recommend the House to pause before they accept representations of this kind. The treaties of 1815 intrusted the Ionian Isles to England about in the same manner that they intrusted Paris to the French people. Both parties possessed what was intrusted to them. We possessed the Ionian Isles before the treaties of 1815, and it becomes us to consider how we possessed them. We possessed them by conquest; and the question immediately arises why were they conquered? You do not conquer places out of mere wantonness or for amusement. The Ionian Isles were conquered, because the great men, to whom was intrusted the duty of guarding British interests and maintaining British power in those waters, represented most earnestly to the English government that they could not accomplish their behests as long as these insular harbours were in possession of our powerful rival and enemy. It is, or it should be, well known that the occupation of the Ionian Isles by the French was part of the secret negotiations of Tilsit; and it was only in consequence of an arrangement with Russia, before war was declared between that power and England, that French troops were landed from Russian ships on these islands, where the injurious influence exercised by them during the war upon British shipping and British interests was so great, that no less a man than Lord Collingwood impressed upon the British government that it was absolutely necessary that these harbours should be in our possession. And they were in our possession. Corfu was not seized in a military sense; but six of these islands, including Cephalonia, which was described by Sir Charles Napier—no mean authority on this subject—as possessing the most considerable harbour in the Mediterranean, had been conquered, and had been five years in the possession of England at the time of the peace. And why was not Corfu in our possession? Why, Corfu was a thorn

in our side. We had not succeeded in taking Corfu, but we had strictly blockaded it; and when Napoleon suddenly fell, the French surrendered it to England by a military convention. It was in every sense a military surrender; and therefore, when the congress of Vienna had to deliberate upon the settlement of Europe, we were in military possession of these islands, which we had in fact conquered and occupied, because in the possession of our enemy we had found them most injurious to our power and our interests."

Mr. Disraeli then proceeded to argue that the handing over of the Ionian Islands to Greece would have a mischievous influence upon that power: it would increase the resources, the population, and wealth of Greece; it would encourage her to aspire to the possession of Albania, Thessaly, and other provinces, and thus endanger the integrity of the Turkish empire. The islands had been taken by us because their possession by an enemy would be injurious to our interests; therefore it was absurd to maintain that their possession by England was not conducive to her interests. He hoped that Her Majesty's government were not about to adopt the wild notions which had of late been promulgated, which were hostile to the very principle of the British empire. "Professors and rhetoricians," he said in conclusion, "find a system for every contingency and a principle for every chance; but you are not going, I hope, to leave the destinies of the British empire to prigs and pedants. The statesmen who construct, and the warriors who achieve, are only influenced by the instinct of power, and animated by the love of country. Those are the feelings and those the methods which form empires. There may be grave questions as to the best mode of obtaining wealth. Some may be in favour of protection of domestic and colonial interests, some of unrestricted competition, or some of what I am quite surprised have now become so modish, commercial treaties and reciprocal arrangements for the advan-

tage of commercial exchange—propositions which used to be scouted in this House; but there can be no question either in or out of this House that the best mode of preserving wealth is power. A country, and especially a maritime country, must get possession of the strong places of the world if it wishes to contribute to its power. I cannot say that I have yet heard any argument that appears to justify the course Her Majesty's government have hitherto pursued, or the expectations they have held out to the Greek islands."

In reply Lord Palmerston defended the foreign policy of the government—the operations in China, the proceedings relative to Denmark, and the offers made to the Vatican. With regard to the cession of the Ionian Islands, he thus vindicated the course ministers had pursued:—"The fate of those islands," he said, "was determined, like the fate of many of the countries of Europe, by the treaties concluded in 1815; and to those treaties, and especially to the treaty in regard to the Ionian Islands, Great Britain was a party. Well, what did that treaty do? Did that treaty say that the Ionian Islands were to be what the right hon. gentleman stated—a British territory, and to belong to the British crown as one of its possessions? Quite the contrary. It stated that the Septinsular Republic was to be a separate and independent state, but, as a separate and independent state, was to be placed under the protection of the British crown. But it is no part of the dominions of the British crown. The queen is not sovereign of the Ionian Islands. Our treaties do not include or bind the Ionian Islands. When a treaty of commerce is made, there must be a separate act on the part of the Ionian Islands to give them the benefit of that treaty. They have a separate legislature of their own; we do not make laws for them. They are to all intents and purposes, literally and legally, a separate state, forming no part of the British territory or dominions, but under the protection of

England, by virtue of the treaty concluded between England and the other great powers of Europe. Therefore, all the argument of the right hon. gentleman, founded on the supposition that Corfu and the other Ionian Islands were to England what Paris is to France, is, if he will allow me to repeat his own words, a 'perfect absurdity,' and has no bearing whatever on the question which the House may have to consider with reference to these islands. It is not now the time to discuss the policy of making that cession under the circumstances contemplated by the paragraph in the queen's speech. My own opinion is that it would be a wise measure. I think it would be a generous measure. I think it is due to that Ionian state, which was placed under our protection for its own benefit, and not for our advantage. We were bound to do the best for it. I believe we have done the best for it hitherto by maintaining the protectorate; but I think, if Greece is established under an enlightened sovereign, who will develop her internal prosperity and maintain her external peace, that it will be for the benefit of those islands to be united with their fellow-countrymen. I think, too, that it is an example which may not be lost upon other countries. There are other questions pending in the world, in Europe especially, with regard to which an example of generous disinterestedness on the part of Great Britain, for the benefit of those whose fate has been committed to her charge, may not be without result, and I trust it may be imitated hereafter." The address was then agreed to without any opposition.

Shortly after this debate the subject of the treaty of commerce with Italy came up for discussion. The Liberal party have always piqued themselves upon their originality in advocating commercial treaties, and upon their sound and special support of the principles of free trade; perhaps the remarks made by Mr. Disraeli (February 17, 1863) upon this occasion may tend somewhat to

check the ardour of their self-glorification. "Sir," he said, "I never heard that commercial principles were connected with the abstract principle of a free exchange of commodities between nations. There is nothing very modern, I believe, in the invention of commercial treaties; nor am I aware that the Tory party have ever shown a disrelish to support commercial treaties, if commercial treaties are to be accepted, as we are told by a member of the government (Mr. Layard), as a test of sincerity of belief in the principle of free trade. Why, commercial treaties even with France have been negotiated successfully by Tory ministers many years before the present commercial treaty with France. There was the commercial treaty of Mr. Pitt, which was only a reproduction of the treaty which Lord Bolingbroke, a Tory minister, negotiated successfully more than 150 years ago, for the interchange of products between England and France on terms much easier than those that at present exist. And why was that treaty negotiated, but not ratified? Why was it defeated? It was defeated through the opposition of the Whig party in this House. Mr. Addison, one of the most distinguished members that ever sat in this House, and who afterwards was secretary of state, exerted all his wit and unrivalled powers of humour and composition in ridiculing the arrival of a distinguished foreigner in this country—one Count Tariff, whose mission was to introduce the habit of free exchange of commodities between two great nations.\* Those powers of ridicule and humour, supported by the unfortunate prejudices of the country, defeated that treaty. Therefore nothing can be more unfounded than to suppose that, because we on this side of the House are in favour of commercial treaties, we are in fact at all deserting those principles which have been habitually supported, I may almost say for centuries,

\* See "The late Trial and Conviction of Count Tariff." *Addison's Works*, edited by Tickell, vol. v., pp. 393-399.

by the Tory party." Nor were commercial treaties, Mr. Disraeli contended, based upon the principles of free trade. If there could be anything, he argued, opposed to the abstract principles of free exchange, upon which unrestricted competition depended, it was those regulations and conventions by which reciprocal advantages were sought in the commercial exchange of nations. "You," he cried, addressing the Liberal side of the House, "are departing from those principles which you take every opportunity of claiming as your own; you are departing from the ground of pure science and inexorable logic the moment you attempt to negotiate the terms upon which commercial exchange shall take place. Now, in the case of the French treaty, we came forward with certain advantages which we proposed to exchange for others. That I thought myself at the time, generally speaking, to be a most wise policy. I thought, and always have thought, that anything which favoured commercial exchange between England and France was a policy which each country ought to favour; but the scheme was entirely contrary to those abstract principles of free exchange which you have always upheld. A commercial treaty is based upon reciprocity, a principle which the Conservative party have always advocated, and not upon free trade."

Then he proceeded to assert—statements which have been so amply fulfilled by the commercial depression at the present day—that by the adoption of free trade the country had been too liberal in parting with its privileges, and could not now return to protection and reciprocity, or in other words, to commercial treaties. "The country," he said, mindful of the memorable free-trade debate, "has accepted the policy of unrestricted competition. If it be dissatisfied with that policy, let it frankly announce its dissatisfaction. But we cannot have the advantage of a policy of unrestricted competition, and at the same time as regards commerce enjoy the ad-

vantages of exchange under diplomatic arrangement; it is impossible at once to enjoy both. The country now wants to have the double advantage, but warning enough has been given. You have been told often and often by members of this House, that whether it regards commerce or whether it respects navigation, you were too liberal in parting with the advantages and privileges you possessed; but the principles of unrestricted competition were adopted, and it is now too late to inquire whether you are right or wrong. The policy which you then supported was accepted, and by that policy you must in my opinion stand." To endeavour to combine the commercial advantages which accrue from unrestricted competition with the benefits which can only attend upon diplomatic arrangements was, he contended, a monstrous effort which could only end in failure. The age of commercial treaties was past, because England had now no means and no materials for negotiation. Political influence, and not the influence of commercial considerations, could now alone help England to negotiate a commercial treaty.

But of all foreign questions—far above commercial treaties with France or Italy or Belgium—the resistance of the Poles against the tyranny of Russia was the event which was followed with the keenest sympathy and interest by England generally. Papers relating to the insurrection were laid before parliament, and more than one debate ensued, which showed how strong was the feeling of the country against the stern measures employed by the Czar to crush the activity of the rebels—if men fighting to regain their own land can be called rebels. Early in the session (February 27, 1863), Mr. Pope Hennessey moved for an address to the crown, representing that certain treaty obligations, incurred by England and other powers with Russia in regard to Poland, had been broken by the Czar, and that the interposition of England in vindication of her own solemn engage-



ments was demanded. He declared that the Polish insurrection was due entirely to the unparalleled outrages committed by Russia against the Poles, which had at last driven that unhappy people to desperation. He did not ask for hostile intervention; with the sympathy of the great powers, parties to the treaty of Vienna, Poland herself would be able to maintain her position. With much that Mr. Hennessey said Lord Palmerston fully agreed. It was impossible, he remarked, not to feel the deepest sympathy for the Polish nation. The treaty of Vienna had been systematically violated; still by that treaty we were not obliged to interfere—we had a right to interfere, but we were not under an obligation to do so. Lord Palmerston concluded by hoping that Mr. Hennessey would be satisfied by the almost unanimous expression of opinion in the House, and would not press his motion.

Mr. Disraeli took part in the debate. "We often hear it said," he began, "in the course of these discussions, that the partition of Poland was a great crime. If it were a great crime, it was a crime shared by the Polish people. The political existence of 20,000,000 is not destroyed without there being some faults on their side. But whether or not it was a great crime, there is no doubt for Europe it was a great misfortune. Since that partition let us recollect what has occurred in Europe. The greatest events which have ever happened in Europe have happened since the partition of Poland. The whole of the French revolution, and all those immense results which flowed from that great ebullition, have since then occurred. Since then there has appeared a character on the European stage, who alone in modern times could be classed with the Alexanders and Cæsars of antiquity. All the boundaries of the kingdoms which existed when Poland was partitioned, have been altered; the laws of almost every country in Europe have been remodelled; new codes have been introduced, and new governments

called into being. In short, greater and more numerous changes have occurred in the eighty years since that event than were probably ever before crowded into a similar period of the history of man." He then delivered a glowing eulogy upon Lord Castlereagh for having counselled, though counselled in vain, at the congress of Vienna, the restoration of political independence to Poland, in the face of the then irresistible and unprecedented strength of Russia. With regard to interference in the affairs of Poland, he was as desirous as any member in the House that ministers should not pass the present state of Poland over in silence, but that they should avail themselves of their rights under the treaty and take every other proceeding which they thought wise and expedient, to carry into action a policy favourable to the Poles. But all that did not necessarily mean war, and he trusted that great and beneficial changes would take place in the condition of Poland without an appeal to "the last arbiter of human destiny."

Then he launched forth against those Polish "patriots," who, on the strength of their black beards, expressive eyes, and garrulous loyalty, were then frequently to be met with in the *salons* of Paris and the drawing-rooms of London; and who, in the full enjoyment of ease and luxury, and leagues removed from the grasp of the Muscovite police, penned furious epistles to their compatriots at Warsaw, bidding unhappy Poland rise against her oppressors and free herself from the Russian yoke—advice which cost the writer nothing, whilst it signified to those who accepted it massacre or the mines. Every country and every cause has never lacked these fiery but singularly prudent agitators. "I always shrink," continued Mr. Disraeli, "from any expression of political sentimentalism. I do not know any people who have suffered so much from political sentimentalism as the Poles. Year after year there have been people living in Paris and London, some of them in a state of

comparative luxury, stimulating their unfortunate countrymen in Poland to fruitless insurrection and to useless revolt; and all this time we have been favoured by them with expressions of feeling which, if expressions of feeling would effect the salvation of nations, have certainly been abundant and profuse." He concluded by entertaining the hope that since Russia was no longer the powerful nation she once was, and since England, France, and Austria, no longer the exhausted powers of 1814, were on the side of Poland, the policy recommended by Lord Castlereagh might at last be carried out. He thought this all the more probable since the Polish struggle differed materially from its preceding struggles. "In Poland we have," he said, "at present a sheer insurrection of the people against oppression. It is a movement not originated and not stimulated by foreign emissaries. It has not been created by conspiracies in other countries; it has not been fostered in order to promote local ambition or the objects of faction. It is a national movement; it possesses all the elements of a sacred cause, the love of a country, the memory of a glorious past, and as I hope and will believe, the inspiration of a triumphant future."

One of the consequences of this debate was to cause Earl Russell to pen a despatch to the English minister at St. Petersburg, stating that Her Majesty's government viewed with the deepest concern the condition of affairs then existing in Poland. "Great Britain," he said, "as a party to the treaty of 1815, and as a power deeply interested in the tranquillity of Europe, deems itself entitled to express its opinions upon the events now taking place, and is anxious to do so in the most friendly spirit towards Russia, and with a sincere desire to promote the interests of all parties concerned. Why does not His Imperial Majesty, whose benevolence is generally and cheerfully acknowledged, put an end at once to this bloody conflict, by proclaim-

ing mercifully an immediate and unconditional amnesty to his revolted Polish subjects, and at the same time announce his intention to replace without delay his kingdom of Poland in possession of the political and civil privileges which were granted to it by the Emperor Alexander I. in execution of the stipulations of the treaty of 1815? If this were done, a national Diet and a national administration would in all probability content the Poles and satisfy European opinion."

This communication had no effect; the insurrection still continued, and Russia did not stay her hand in suppressing with all the fierce brutality of the Muscovite nature the rising of her rebellious subjects. Later in the session Earl Russell, acting in concert with the cabinets of France and Austria, sent a second despatch to St. Petersburg, suggesting the recommendations of the English government as to the measures proper to be adopted by Russia in her future policy towards Poland. "Her Majesty's government," he said, "would deem themselves guilty of great presumption if they were to express an assurance that vague declarations of good intentions, or even the enactment of some wise laws, would make such an impression on the minds of the Polish people as to obtain peace and restore obedience. In present circumstances it appears to Her Majesty's government, that nothing less than the following outline of measures should be adopted as the bases of pacification:—(1) Complete and general amnesty. (2) National representation, with powers similar to those which are fixed by the charter of the 15th–27th November, 1815. (3) Poles to be named to public offices in such a manner as to form a distinct national administration having the confidence of the country. (4) Full and entire liberty of conscience; repeal of the restrictions imposed on Catholic worship. (5) The Polish language recognized in the kingdom as the official language, and used as such in the administration of the law and in education.

(6) The establishment of a regular and legal system of recruiting. These six points might serve as the indications of measures to be adopted, after calm and full deliberation. But it is difficult, nay, almost impossible, to create the requisite confidence and calm while the passions of men are becoming daily more excited, their hatreds more deadly, their determination to succeed or perish more fixed and immovable."

Before an answer was received to this despatch, Mr. Pope Hennessey had again moved for an address to the crown, praying for interference in Polish affairs. Mr. Disraeli made a few remarks on the occasion. He did not anticipate great results, he said, even if the propositions of the government were accepted by Russia; they would only bring about a state of things very similar to that which existed before, and which must be considered essentially of a provisional character. They did not, as it seemed to him, offer any solution of the difficulty. In his opinion there were only two solutions—the unity of the Russian empire, or the independence of Poland. These were two intelligible policies. No doubt, in discussion much might be said on both sides. The propositions of the government partook entirely of the character of mere diplomatic interference. They could do nothing; they could produce no effect whatever on the circumstances with which ministers had to deal. He could not say that the policy which the government had shadowed forth was one which was at all distinguished by prescience, by sagacity, or by that firmness which led to results. "He must be a very sanguine politician," concluded Mr. Disraeli, "who can suppose the propositions of Her Majesty's government will be accepted by Russia. If adopted, they can only raise a phantom of Polish independence, which in due course must lead again to a conjuncture such as we have to contend with at present; and no solution of the state of affairs which has periodically disturbed Europe appears to

me to be indicated in the policy of Her Majesty's government."

The verdict of the House was, however, on this occasion against continuing the debate until the country had been informed of the nature of the answers returned by Russia to the propositions of the government. As we know, Prince Gortschakoff declined to discuss in detail those propositions. "If Earl Russell," he wrote, "were exactly informed of what passes in the kingdom of Poland, he would know, as we do, that wherever the armed rebellion has striven to acquire substance, to give itself a visible head, it has been crushed. The masses have kept aloof from it, the rural population evinces even hostility to it, because the disorders by which agitators live ruin the industrial classes. The insurrection sustains itself only by a terrorism unprecedented in history. The principle of action of the directing committees from without is, to keep up agitation at all cost, in order to give food for the declamations of the press, to abuse public opinion, and to harass the governments, by furnishing an occasion and a pretext for a diplomatic intervention which should lead to military action. Desirable as it may be speedily to place a term to the effusion of blood, this object can only be attained by the insurgents throwing down their arms and surrendering themselves to the clemency of the emperor. Every other arrangement would be incompatible with the dignity of our august master, and with the sentiments of the Russian nation." In any case, the prince insisted on the re-establishment of order in Poland as an indispensable condition which must precede any application of the measures destined for the pacification of the kingdom.

A few days before the budget was introduced to parliament, the cabinet was somewhat suddenly deprived of one of its most important members. During the Easter recess Sir George Cornwall Lewis had caught a cold, which was followed by a bilious attack, under which he sank after

a brief illness of two days. From the very first his unwearied industry, his sound common sense, and the clear practical manner in which he treated all subjects intrusted to his care had marked him out for office. He was no orator; but halting and hesitating as were his words, it was felt that he was thoroughly the master of what he was discussing, and he was always listened to with the deepest attention. He had filled numerous posts in the government, and on the resignation of Lord Herbert of Lea had been appointed secretary of state for war. Outside parliament he was known as the author of various political and historical works, which are still held in high repute. Out of respect to his memory, the House of Commons adjourned on the day of his death. Though a political opponent, and one with whom there had been in the past not a few sharp passages of criticism, Mr. Disraeli seized the opportunity to say a few graceful words upon the sudden removal of the late statesman. "The queen," he said (April 15, 1863), "has lost one of the ablest of her servants, and this House has lost one of its members who, I am sure, possessed the universal regard and respect of all who knew him. I do not know the man who combined in so eminent a degree as Sir George Lewis, both from acquirement and from native power of thought, the faculty upon all public matters of arriving at a sound and thorough opinion. Although he was a man most remarkably free from prejudice and passion, that exemption from sentiments which are supposed in general to be necessary to the possession of active power had not upon him that effect which they generally exercise; and he was a man who, in all the transactions of life, brought a great organizing faculty and a great power of sustained perseverance to the transaction of public affairs. Sir, I am sure that the rising statesmen of both sides may take him as an example, that in many particulars may be remembered and followed with advantage; and I am quite sure that his

name will never be mentioned in this House without feelings of deep respect and regret for what may be deemed an untimely loss which I think the country could ill bear."

The financial statement, when introduced by Mr. Gladstone, created little discussion at the time it was brought forward. Mr. Gladstone stated his facts in a plain, business-like manner, and the leader of the Opposition refrained then from entering upon any detailed criticism as to the propositions laid before the House. It was only afterwards, when the budget began to be examined more closely, that discussion arose. Briefly the announcement made by the chancellor of the exchequer was as follows:—The estimated charge was £67,749,000, and the revenue £71,490,000. The duty on chicory and coffee was to be equalized; clubs were to be made liable to the duties payable for the sale of wines and spirits; and the exemption, under the Income-tax Acts, of corporate trust property and of charitable endowments was to be withdrawn. These additional taxes would amount to £133,000 a year, raising the estimated surplus to £3,874,000. Mr. Gladstone then proposed to reduce the duty on tea to 1s. per pound, to take 2d. per pound off the general rate of income tax, and to equalize the tax on incomes between £100 and £200. The surplus of £534,000 the government did not propose to part with, and Mr. Gladstone appealed to the committee to support them in retaining that amount in hand. Some of these proposals, as we shall see, encountered much opposition, and were eventually withdrawn.

On the occasion of the prime minister moving a resolution for the grant of £50,000, in addition to the £60,000 already collected by voluntary subscriptions, towards the expense of erecting a suitable memorial to the late Prince Consort, Mr. Disraeli availed himself of the opportunity, whilst cordially approving of the grant, again to refer (April 23, 1863) to the deceased prince. He approved of the design of a public memorial,

and explained why the public fund had been found to be insufficient for the purpose. "No one can doubt," said Mr. Disraeli, alluding to the death of the Prince Consort, "the real sympathy that pervaded the country when the great calamity occurred. Indeed, that is scarcely an adequate expression to describe the emotion; it was a feeling rather of anguish—anguish for the loss of the prince who was departed, and equally so for those who were left lone and desolate. I think there was upon that occasion every desire in the country to express, so far as its contributions could do so, the feelings of the nation. But it is to be observed, that at the moment the sympathy of the country was of a personal character. The loss was so sudden, so unexpected, that the natural emotions of the community were all directed to the personal character of him who had passed away. The peerless husband, the perfect father, the master whose yoke was gentleness, the wise and faithful counsellor of the sovereign who was his consort, these were the traits in the character of the prince that attached and appealed to all hearts; and while there was a general desire by public contributions to show a sense of those qualities, every community felt that it was equally a judge of those virtues with the metropolis; and there was an immense amount of local subscriptions which, although inconveniently, were naturally dedicated to the ornament or utility of the district in which the subscriptions were raised. For example, every person who had a benevolent scheme for raising an hospital or founding a school seized that opportunity of general sympathy and sorrow, and upon the merits of the prince whom we had lost, made a successful appeal for funds, which they would not otherwise have obtained. That is the reason why the public contributions were not of an amount adequate to carry out the object now desired. But as time drew on, something of the influence of posterity was exercised upon the opinion of the country;

and it became conscious that it had lost, not merely a man of virtuous and benignant character, who had exercised the fine qualities he possessed for the advantage of the community of which he was a prominent member, but it felt that it had lost a man of very original and peculiar character, who had exercised a great influence upon the age, and which it felt, as time advanced, would have been still more sensibly experienced. The character of Prince Albert was peculiar in this respect, that he combined two great qualities which are generally considered to be incompatible, and combined those qualities in a high degree. He united the faculty of contemplation with the talent of action, and was equally remarkable for profundity of thought and promptitude of organization. Add to these qualities all the virtues of the heart, and the House will see that the character thus composed was a very remarkable one. He brought this peculiar temperament to act upon the public mind for purposes of great moment, but of great difficulty. The task which the prince proposed to himself was to extend the knowledge, refine the taste, and enlarge the sympathies of a proud and ancient people. Had he not been gifted with deep thought and a singular facility and happiness of applying and mastering details, he could not have succeeded so fully as he did in those efforts, the results of which we shall find so much the greater as time goes on. Such being now the impression of the country—that we have lost, not simply an accomplished and benignant prince, but one of those minds which influence their age and mould the character of a people—a strong feeling prevails that a memorial should be raised in the metropolis of the empire. I believe that that desire is very general, and therefore the government has taken a course which the country is not only perfectly prepared for, but expected and required."

He could not agree, continued Mr. Disraeli, that the public contributions should be devoted to what was called

some purpose of utility. A purpose of utility meant that they should endow a charity, or erect a building, which might illustrate some isolated feeling and feature in the life of the prince. But a public memorial, such as the country required, should be of a universal and complete description. It should apply to the general sentiments of the country, and should represent as far as art could represent the full career of the man, so that future generations might behold a monument which should serve for their instruction and encouragement. "It should, as it were," concluded the speaker, "represent the character of the prince himself in the harmony of its proportions, in the beauty of its ornament, and in its enduring nature. It should be something direct, significant, and choice; so that those who come after us may say this is the type and testimony of a sublime life and a transcendent career, and thus they were recognized by a grateful and admiring people!"

Of all the proposals contained in the financial statement of the chancellor of the exchequer the one which encountered the keenest opposition, not only in the House but throughout the country, was the clause suggesting the taxation of charities. All the corporate interests were at once up in arms, and appealed to their powerful patrons to protect them against such an iniquitous encroachment upon their funds. Taxation of that kind, it was said, would be attended with the most deplorable results. Hospitals would be forced to reduce the number of their inmates; the resources of schools would be crippled; and the already slender allowances granted to the infirm, the sick, and the aged would have to be reduced to a sum which would scarcely be of any service to the recipient. Whilst advocating his proposal Mr. Gladstone had thought fit to indulge in the most violent invective against the deceased donors, from whose bequests the existing endowments had been derived. He abused the

motives of various of the donors and testators; he found great fault with many of the charitable institutions, and he openly charged several of those establishments with misapplication of the funds intrusted to their care and control. These strictures, coming from one who represented the university of Oxford, were rightly considered to be in the worst taste. Lord Robert Cecil, amid the approving cheers of the House, warmly denounced the conduct of Mr. Gladstone in supporting an unjust proposal by such vindictive and splenetic remarks. "The chancellor of the exchequer," he said, "from his position as representing a great university—a university which relied to a great extent for its endowments on the bequests of the dead—ought to have been able to appreciate with justice the motives by which the donors were actuated. He was speaking no sentiment, no idle phrase, but an historical fact, when he said it was not from spite, it was not from a petty desire to have their names written on white walls, not from a desire to be toasted at public dinners, that these great men made those dispositions to our charities. It was not his part to defend the tenets of a church to which he did not belong; but speaking for the dead, and as a matter of historical notoriety, everybody who heard him well knew that those who left those great estates deemed that they served the glory of God and the good of their fellow-men; they were not animated by any of those mean and petty motives which had been attributed to them; they obeyed the idea of the age in which they lived, and followed the dictates of the religion in which they believed. It did seem too much, after generation on generation had enjoyed the benefits of their bequests, that a statesman should come forward in this day, and because those bequests did not suit or square with the symmetrical theories in which he believed, or the hard and material philosophy to which he had devoted himself, should attempt to besmear the memories of the

testators by ascribing to them motives that were foreign to their souls."

On the morning of the day (May 4, 1863) when the proposal was to be submitted to the committee of the House of Commons, one of the most influential deputations that ever attended upon a minister had an interview with Mr. Gladstone at his official residence. It was introduced by the Duke of Cambridge, and was composed of the two archbishops, several bishops, various archdeacons, many members of both Houses of Parliament, and all the treasurers and secretaries of the chief charities in the metropolis. The chancellor of the exchequer listened to the arguments of the various speakers, and then said that he would reserve his defence of the proposal until the scheme was formally introduced to the House in the evening.

When the subject came before the committee, it was evident that the unpopular proposal was doomed. The feeling of the House was strongly against it; and as Mr. Gladstone, with all his plausibility, with all his eloquence, and with all the shrewish spite with which he fights a losing battle, defended his scheme, murmurs of strong disapprobation were aroused on both sides of the chamber. The chancellor of the exchequer considered that his proposal was a wise one, and with regard to the great mass of charitable property, an equitable compromise. He calculated that the exemption of charities from the income tax entailed a loss upon the revenue of fully £250,000 a year. That allowance to charities was virtually an expenditure kept out of view and not under the control of parliament, which was left as to that great expenditure entirely in the dark, and he asked why that promiscuous gift of £250,000 should be continued? With regard to the statement that if the hospitals were compelled to pay income tax they must either close some of their wards or reduce their beds, he said with some truth:—"It was not my intention to make any

remarks on the management of hospitals of this kind, which we must all regard with so much favour and respect; but when at every turn the threat is flung in my face that if this measure is carried out the number of patients must be diminished, then I am obliged to give it particular consideration. I do not believe that the beds of patients will be reduced. Those who, in the case of the protected trades, declared that if protection were withdrawn they must dismiss so many of their workmen, were not men who told lies. They really believed what they said, but were not aware that more economical arrangements would enable them to keep these workmen, pursue their trade, and make larger profits than before. One of the great evils of the present system is, that while you bestow public money on these establishments you dispense with all public control over them, and thus annul all effective motives for economy. Endowed institutions laugh at public opinion. The press knows nothing of their expenditure; parliament knows nothing of it. It is too much to say that hospitals are managed by angels and archangels, and do not, like the rest of humanity, stand in need of supervision, criticism, and rebuke. Therefore, even in the case of St. Bartholomew's I object to an exemption which, by its very nature, at once removes the principal motives for economical management. When the managers tell me that the exaction of £820 will compel them to dismiss 500 patients, I am entitled to ask, Why then do you spend £220 in a feast? What right have you to eat up in an hour 150 beds? I confess I am amazed at the skill with which my opponents have put their best foot foremost. Their tactics and strategy have been admirable, but their case will not bear close scrutiny. What are the circumstances of Guy's, of St. Thomas's, and similar establishments? Every year they are able to place £3000 or £4000 each in reproductive investments in land. They

are thinking, not merely of the sick, but of their own future aggrandizement and extension. I was informed the other day that St. Thomas's spends fifteen per cent. of its income in improvements on land. Well, then, it is a matter for the state to consider, whether the indefinite enrichment of such corporations—even of those instituted for the best of purposes—when entirely removed from the control of public opinion, the press, or parliament, is to go on without limit, and is to be augmented by contributions from the public purse. I do not believe that a single patient will be dismissed from one of the hospitals of London, if this proposal is agreed to; but if there were the slightest apprehension of such an occurrence, private charity would at once prevent it."

As speaker after speaker rose to oppose the proposal—and it was plain that the sense of the House was strongly against the measure—Mr. Gladstone, towards the close of the evening, came forward and suggested that the objectionable clause should be withdrawn. To Mr. Disraeli this announcement appeared sound and rational; still the violent opinions promulgated by the chancellor of the exchequer ought not, he thought, to be allowed to pass unnoticed. "The right hon. gentleman," he said (May 4, 1863), "introduced a short time ago his general financial statement. When I listened to it I was anxious it should pass, as to its main features, with no organized opposition; and I contented myself that in the course of discussion that would arise, the objectionable portion of it would disappear or be withdrawn without being painfully obtruded on the consideration of the House. I was anxious for this for the honour of the House of Commons, because the budget introduced by the right hon. gentleman was in its main features the budget of the House of Commons. Last year the House was called upon—I will not stop to inquire by whom or on what side of the House he may sit—to consider whether it was not expedient

to counsel the government that a considerable reduction was essential in the public expenditure, seeing by that means alone a reduction of taxation could be attained. We were then told that the reduction of the expenditure by any considerable amount was quite illusory; that no one could venture to touch the expenses of the army or the navy; and that the man was guilty of subserviency and servility to France who could for a moment, and in however moderate terms, insist on the wisdom, the policy, and the possibility of such a course. This session has brought forward a different view of public affairs. Economy is possible. It is not now subserviency or servility to France to obtain by most legitimate means a reduction of the burdens of the people. And I say, that for this great measure of reduction brought forward by the government, we are indebted to the House of Commons, and not to the government. It is the House of Commons that has reduced the tea duty and the income tax; and in these main features the budget is the budget of the House of Commons."

He regretted, however, continued Mr. Disraeli, that in this House of Commons' budget Mr. Gladstone should have introduced, as if to vindicate his claim to financial originality, some remarkable measures of eccentric invention to the wonder of an admiring parliament. He had taxed carriers, he had taxed clubs; but the taxation of charities was a novelty the most unnecessary and objectionable of all. Mr. Gladstone had stated that if charities were exempted from taxation, such exemption was to be looked upon as a donation from the state. Mr. Disraeli declined to admit the truth of that assertion; it was a principle utterly false in its premises, and equally fallacious in its consequences. The income tax was a tax on persons, and not on property; "being a tax on persons, we are naturally asked, why are those persons to be liable to the tax who are not enjoying that amount of income which



you exempt under the general regulation of the income tax, whilst others enjoying the same or a greater income are free?" The answer was that those persons were to be made liable because Mr. Gladstone chose to entertain views of the endowments of the country different from those which had influenced parliament during the last century and a half, and entirely opposed to the convictions and requirements of the country.

"And what," inquired Mr. Disraeli, "is the remedy of the chancellor of the exchequer for all those evils—for all that vicious principle which is the foundation of the endowments of England, for all that mismanagement, for all that impolitic state of affairs which he denounces with so much power? What is his remedy for the enormous imperfections in the old bequests—for the evils in those petty charities which he has called forth from their obscure existence—for the abuses connected with those magnificent foundations of hospitals and colleges which have contributed so much to the promotion of education and the development of benevolence in this country? Why, it is the application of the income tax! The condition of our charities has for thirty years, more or less, attracted the attention of the legislature. The crown has issued commissions and parliament has appointed committees, the labours of which have been eminently judicious and useful. I should doubt, therefore, under any circumstances, whether it was necessary or expedient on the part of the government to call public attention to the character of those institutions, with a view to any change in their management or character. But if the government are of opinion that those endowments are so injurious to the public weal; if they think that the statement of the chancellor of the exchequer is justified by the facts; and that this is a question which demands our immediate and careful attention—though there is nothing to justify such a conclusion in

what we see at present—they should have brought the subject forward in such a shape that we might have dealt with it in a satisfactory manner. It is totally inadequate to hold out to us as a sufficient means of remedial agency, that we should apply the income tax to those institutions.

"I think that every point which the chancellor of the exchequer has raised, and which he has placed before us with all the exertions of his ingenious casuistry, has entirely failed; and they have failed because they all spring from one principle, the foundation of which is entirely illusory—from the false assumption that exemption from taxation is essentially unjust. But the course which, on this assumption, has been taken appears to me to be monstrous; and I am not surprised that the country and the House, even in so short a space of time as has elapsed since the right hon. gentleman made his financial statement, should have been excited and risen, as it were, in agitation against such a proposition. It offends all the feelings of tradition which have been cherished in this country, all our local associations, all that veneration for the principle of inheritance, to which we have so long adhered. We have heard arguments to-night which have been a denunciation of endowments, and almost an appeal for confiscation. That this proposition should have been introduced as part of a financial scheme is indeed amazing; that it should have been introduced for so slight a financial object is still more astonishing; but when it was in the power of the government, not of their own happy imagining, but following the strong sense of the country as represented in the House of Commons, to effect those great reductions of taxation which our advice and public opinion had indicated, that they should have thought fit, under such circumstances, unnecessarily to introduce the discussion of principles which disturb almost the foundation of society, does appear to me to be a course of conduct

which the most brilliant rhetoric cannot justify, and which, I think, may lead to consequences which the government may hereafter regret. Sir, I shall only hope that this remarkable proposition, introduced with so much pomp and withdrawn in a manner so unpretending, may be the last of the endeavours that will be made to attack the endowments of this country, which the wisdom of the times in which we live may improve by the application of the principles on which they are founded. Commissions and committees have already produced ample suggestions for that object, but the endowments themselves are founded upon a principle that has contributed to the greatness of this country, and which, I trust, this country will always cherish."

The objectionable clause was then withdrawn. A similar fate befell the proposal to tax clubs and the other suggestions of an equally petty and irritating character. Finally the budget, which was indeed, as Mr. Disraeli called it, a "House of Commons' budget," since it was the House of Commons which had suggested its leading features and had eliminated its objectionable clauses, passed through committee and was accepted by parliament.

After the financial discussions, the most interesting debates during the session of 1863 were those which touched upon religious matters. For some time past it had been a matter of grievance that prisoners confined in our gaols who happened to profess a creed other than that of the Church of England, were deprived altogether, unless under certain special conditions which were seldom acted upon, of religious consolation unless they consented to attend to the ministrations of the prison chaplain, who was always a member of the Anglican church. The Roman Catholic prisoner, during his term of confinement, found himself shut out from the solace of confession and from all priestly aid and advice. The nonconformist prisoner, on the few occasions when he found himself within the walls of a gaol, was in the same

unhappy plight as his popish companion; with him no dissenting minister was permitted to pray, or by exhortations to attempt to lead him from the vicious paths of his old life. To remove these offensive restrictions, and as an effectual remedy against this piece of mediæval intolerance, Sir George Grey brought in a bill—the Prison Ministers Bill—which was to grant to the inmates of prisons not being members of the established church the benefit of the attendance of divines of their own religious persuasion. "Let my hon. friends," said Sir George on introducing his measure, "who object to the provisions of this bill, suppose they were members of a Protestant minority in a community composed chiefly of Catholics, living under a Catholic government, and that persons professing their own religious faith, from their circumstances in life, from the peculiar temptations to which they were subjected, or from any other causes, composed a considerable proportion of the criminal population of the country. Would it be satisfactory to them, or would it be a sufficient answer to them when they asked that adequate provision should be made for the religious instruction of those persons, to be told that all prisoners were placed by law under the exclusive care of Catholic priests, but that they might be visited by Protestant ministers if they made a special request, though even those visits would not exempt them from repeated personal intercourse with Roman Catholic priests, with whom it would rest what books were provided for their instruction? That would be a state of the law anything but satisfactory to my hon. friends; they would refuse to acquiesce in any such arrangements; and how, then, can we expect our Roman Catholic fellow-countrymen to be contented with the state of the law which I have now described, or how can we think them unreasonable in pressing for some change?"

The real hostility which the bill had to encounter was from the extreme Protestant party. It was admitted that the proportion

of dissenters who would benefit by the bill was very small, and therefore the scheme of Sir George Grey was looked upon as in effect a measure for sanctioning the employment of Roman Catholic priests in our gaols. The sensitive Protestantism of the country took alarm. The Liberals were in favour of the bill, the Conservatives were divided; some giving their adhesion to the measure, and others stoutly opposing it. Yet the bill introduced no new principle. In the army the Roman Catholic soldiers enjoyed the ministrations of a priest, whose services were paid for by the state. To the military prisons a Roman Catholic priest was attached. Why deprive the civilian of what the soldier enjoyed? It was also urged that in Ireland there was a paid Protestant chaplain in every prison, though there might not be a single Protestant in the cells. The bill of Sir George Grey proposed to empower the magistrates to appoint Roman Catholic chaplains in prisons, to appropriate out of the rates a reasonable remuneration, and to have authority to dismiss the priests when necessary. The opponents of the measure declared that such a bill was uncalled for and unnecessary; it would sanction a Roman Catholic priest in every prison in the country; it would endanger the rights of the established church, and would clothe the magistrates with a new power.

These opponents were almost to a man on the Conservative side of the House, and Mr. Disraeli used all his arguments and eloquence to prove to his friends that the fears they entertained were groundless. Intolerance in all its forms was always hateful to the leader of the Opposition; he was sprung from a race which had too long been the victim of persecution for him to have sympathy with narrow-minded prejudices, or a harsh and debasing policy. He admitted (April 20, 1863) that the objections to the bill were not of a light character; but on the other hand, the arguments in favour of the measure recommended themselves, not merely on the ground of expediency, but of justice.

Therefore he would claim from all who took part in the debate the exercise of a spirit of forbearance. There were two great objections urged against the bill. One was that it affected injuriously the status of the Church of England. He held quite the contrary opinion. "Sir," he said, "if I thought this measure had even a tendency to impair the authority of the Church of England I should oppose it. In this age, when the elements of government are daily diminishing, when the power of governing nations is every day weakening, it would be most unwise to impair the influence of an institution that has contributed in so eminent and beneficial a manner to the formation of that English character, which after all is the best security for the preservation of all we most value. And I cannot conceal from my own conviction that the time may come, and is even nearer than many imagine when in our peril and perplexity we may find a guide and guardian in that institution which, by the services thus rendered to us, will establish fresh claims to the confidence and gratitude of the country. Happily, in my opinion, for this country the still existing privileges of the Church of England are great and manifold; but this should always be remembered—that the privileges of the Church of England, entirely in theory and greatly still in practice, embody and represent popular rights. That is the source of their strength. I cannot myself see what popular right is represented by the Church of England exercising an arbitrary power to prevent the captive, who is not in her communion, from enjoying the consolations of his religion. Sir, I say that, on the contrary, such a policy is injurious to the Church of England. It is the interest of the Church of England, it is the interest of all ecclesiastical institutions, and indeed of all religious bodies, to favour the development of the religious principle—to cherish, encourage, and nurture those spiritual influences which hitherto have controlled and regulated man."

The second objection to the measure was, continued Mr. Disraeli, even of a graver character. It was said that the measure was dangerous to the Protestant spirit of the country. No one could deny the strength and power of that spirit, and was it to be said that a bill of that nature would put in jeopardy the Protestant interests of the country? It was surely forming a mean conception of the Church of England, and taking a poor view of their Protestant spirit, to suppose that such a measure could possibly endanger the one or diminish the other? Such an opinion he could not for a moment entertain. The bill before them was one to do justice, not merely to the Roman Catholic prisoner, but to the Protestant community. "On what possible ground," he asked, "after having adopted those principles with regard to the treatment of criminals which have been confirmed by a long series of legislation, can you justify it to Protestant England, that there shall be in the gaols of the country a considerable portion of the penal population whom you will take no care to reform, and whom you are prepared periodically to let loose to ravage society, unchanged by the influences of religion?" He hoped the House would pass the measure. It was a measure in harmony with all the legislation which the House had of late years sanctioned on those subjects. The objections of those who opposed it might have had their value before the time of Catholic emancipation, or before the repeal of the Test and Corporation Act; but such objections were useless now. The privileges of the Church of England represented popular rights, and so long as they represented popular rights national sympathy would always rally round that great institution. The power of the Church of England and the Protestant feeling of the country would not be maintained by a course of action inconsistent with all their previous legislation, which, by placing obstacles in the way of ameliorating the character and condition of their criminal

population, must produce consequences injurious to society at large.

The bill passed its second reading in the House of Commons by a majority of 152 to 122, and the third reading by about an equal majority. In the House of Lords the numbers were for the second reading 65, and against it 35. The bill ultimately received the royal assent.

During this session Sir John Trelawny, undeterred by past defeats, though somewhat in a desponding tone, again introduced his bill to abolish church-rates, but after a brief discussion it was rejected by a majority of ten. Mr. Disraeli did not speak on this occasion. He was not in the habit of repeating himself, and he had uttered all he had to say on the subject; but from the result of the division we see how faithfully his advice had been followed, and what a difference there had been in the reception of the measure since he had strenuously advocated its rejection. The counsel given at Amersham had certainly not been in vain. In 1855 the second reading of the bill for abolishing church-rates was carried in the House of Commons by a majority of twenty-eight; in 1856 by forty-three; in 1858 by fifty-three; in 1859 by seventy-four; in 1860 by twenty-nine. In 1861, the votes being equal, the bill was lost by the casting vote of the speaker; in 1862 it was negatived by a majority of one; and in 1863 by a majority of ten. It was the powerful influence of the leader of the Opposition which had thus turned the scale.

Upon the third measure, affecting the authority and position of the Church of England, which was introduced this session, Mr. Disraeli spoke at some length. To many of the clergy who were students of science, and who were under the influence of the rationalism flowing from the fountain-head of Germany, the subscription to the Articles was eminently distasteful. To the man who believed in miracles by explaining them away, who had his own views as to the inspiration of Holy Writ, and whose

opinions were somewhat peculiar as to the doctrine of the Atonement, the nature of the sacraments, and the efficacy of any fixed creed, the policy and obligations of the Act of Uniformity were far from acceptable. The matter came before parliament, and led to a most interesting debate. Mr. Buxton moved "That in the opinion of this House the subscription required from the clergy to the Thirty-nine Articles and to the Prayer-book ought to be relaxed." He did not bring forward his motion, said Mr. Buxton, in a spirit hostile to the Church of England, for his main object was to relieve the clergy from what many of them felt to be a grievous burden. It was only to the essential, fundamental doctrines of the church that a general assent could be expected; and if subscriptions were abolished, it would be understood that nothing more was required than a general conformity to those fundamental doctrines. The church should be built upon a broad and tolerant basis, and in these days of culture and scientific discovery it was unwise to restrict the spirit of inquiry.

"It was not to be supposed," Mr. Buxton said, "that while the minds of men were ranging freely over every other region of thought, one great field of truth should be tabooed, and tabooed to those very men who were to be teachers and guides of the people. Why, the clergy ought to lead the religious thought of the age. They ought to be ever widening and deepening the knowledge of the people in Christian truth; but the tendency of those restrictions was to hold them in, and force them to follow with timid steps far behind the public intelligence. That was not the true position in which the church should stand, and the danger was that it might thus become severed from the intelligence of the country. The truth was, that owing to the ecclesiastical causes that had been tried, and the judgments that had been delivered, the subscriptions had become far more stringent than formerly. The doctrines of the church had unhappily grown more precisely

definite; and meanwhile men's minds had been learning far greater daring in dealing with truth, and uniformity of belief had become every day less possible. Be that good or evil, no folly could be greater than that of trying to stay that stir of mind with such wretched barriers as these. If the church still required from young men such an abnegation of all mental freedom, the worthiest would be the first to shrink from such a degrading bondage. Now the cry—the stale and shallow cry—would doubtless be raised of 'The church in danger.' It was wonderful how those who boasted to be the friends of the church could think so ill of her as to fancy that, were she not fenced in here and shored up there, she would totter to her fall. During our own time it seemed to him she had been growing, and was still growing, more powerful, more beneficent, and more beloved. To her might be applied the words of the poet—

'Higher yet her star ascends;  
Traveller, blessedness and light,  
Peace and truth, her course portends.'

And yet there was danger to the church! Two policies were open to her: if she chose to be, not national, but narrow and sectarian; if she drove from her the intellect of the age; if she stubbornly withstood all progress, all reform; if she met the irresistible advance of the human mind, the inevitable growth of religious opinion, the novelties of speculation, the discoveries of science, not with strong and gentle reasoning, but with paroxysms of fear and rage; if she displayed that, which was of all things the most pitiful, the longing to persecute without the power—then, indeed, the day might come when, alienated from all that was most profound in thought and most generous in feeling, she might find herself forsaken and spurned by the English people. A far other career, he believed, was before her. Let men of mind find with her a welcome and a home; let her open her gates wider, and shake off the bonds that cramped her; let her move onward with the age, and lead the van of

its religious thought; let her deal tenderly with error, and grapple boldly with truth; and let her ministers be still foremost in every work of mercy. In short, instead of trusting to outward props, the handiwork of men, let her grow ever more glorious within, more pure, more noble, more profound; then they need not doubt that their children's children would still cleave to the church which their fathers founded and sealed with their blood in the great days of old."

Sir George Grey, upon Mr. Monckton Milnes having withdrawn an amendment, moved the "previous question;" he was followed by Mr. Walpole, Mr. Gladstone, and Lord Robert Cecil. The debate was brought to a close (June 9, 1863) by Mr. Disraeli. After regretting that the motion of Mr. Buxton had been met with the previous question, he said:—"No one is more in favour of the comprehensive character of the Church of England than myself; but I would make this condition, that the comprehensiveness of the Church of England should be based on church principles. The hon. gentleman, the member for Maidstone [Mr. Buxton], as others before him have done, pointed out the origin of the Act of Charles II., to which he supposes such injurious effects upon the comprehensive character of the church may be ascribed. He has shown us how many, who might be included in the pale of the church, are no longer found in its fold; and he has denounced the ancient legislation, the consequences of which may be found in our present situation. I doubt very much the general justice of this criticism, and I doubt whether it was possible at that time, or at any time in this country, or perhaps in any country, to prevent in matters of religion what is called dissent. I look upon dissent as a weakness incident to humanity. Look at the case of the Roman Catholic religion. I will be bound I could show, if it were necessary, that there has been as much dissent, as much heresy, as much schism in the Church of Rome, as in the

Church of England. But the dissent has occasionally been forcibly suppressed, the schism has in some instances been adroitly managed, and the heresy has found a safety-valve in the institution sometimes even of monastic orders. You have found this in a religion established on the principle of infallibility, and in countries where that religion has been supported by the civil power, assuming generally an arbitrary character. What, then, can we expect in a country where, instead of infallibility, religion is founded upon the principle of free inquiry, and where, though that religion has generally speaking been supported by the civil power, that civil power has yet been established on the principle of civil liberty?

"It is only as politicians and as statesmen that we may presume to speak in this House upon this subject; and I maintain that in modern times, since that year 1662, which has just been quoted to the House, no English statesman has ever contemplated that the Church of England, though founded on a catholic creed, should at same time command a catholic communion. For the last 200 years no statesman has contemplated that the whole population of England should be within the pale of the national church. What has been contemplated in these centuries of what I may call the practical working of our constitution, has been this—that there should be a standard of religious truth established by the state in the country; that the religious principle should be recognized as one of the most important and influential in the conduct of government; that the government of this country should not be reduced to a mere question of police, but that we should seek to influence the conduct of men by the highest sanction which can be conceived. Sir, I say that object has been successfully accomplished by the church, in its connection with the state in England, during the last two centuries. We have to-night a new system commended to our notice, which is to bring about a state of affairs more com-

prehensive. The first principle of this new system is, that not only the creed of the church should be catholic, but that the communion should be catholic, and that we should all belong to the same church—a doctrine not very favourable at the outset to that principle of religious liberty which, I believe, is still much esteemed in this country. When you analyze this doctrine it comes to this—The comprehensive church is, in fact, to be a church founded very much on the same principles as that federal constitution of America, of which in this House we have heard so much and so often, and with regard to which recently we have witnessed such strange and startling experience. All creeds are to belong to one church, but all creeds are to retain their own particular opinions. But that experiment has been tried to a great degree on the Continent of Europe. You have had it in Germany; you may see its effects to a certain degree in France; and you may trace them not only in Europe, but in America. You have what without offence may be called an infidel church, composed of various sections of the population, some of them often influenced by fanatical impulses. If on the Continent such an experiment has not been over-successful, what are our chances of success in England, where feelings on religious subjects are so deep and enthusiastic? No one can doubt that the consequences would be of a perilous character, perhaps disastrous to the state, and entailing results which none would dare to contemplate, and all must wish to avoid. Therefore, I very much doubt whether this system of comprehension on which the relaxation of these tests is recommended is a sound one. A church may be so comprehensive that no one may comprehend it.”

Nor was there, asserted Mr. Disraeli, anything alarming in the scepticism now prevalent—nothing certainly to cause the Act of Uniformity to be altered. “A century and a half ago,” he continued, “at a time when England was in a state of

great civilization, these views were very prevalent in this country—much more prevalent than at present. It was a natural reaction from that immense triumph of Puritanism which had destroyed the institutions of the country, and which apparently had effected an enduring change in the national character. That Puritanic spirit passed away, however, and left behind, as a consequence, great latitudinarianism, ending in a general spirit of scepticism. The state of things was far more alarming then than now. The most alarming thing now, it is said, is that an infidel may be made a bishop;\* but infidels then were actually made bishops. There was at that time a large body of the ablest writers and most eminent men that England ever produced devoted with greater courage, and in a far more unblushing manner than is now the fashion, to the propagation of those ideas which are now circulated with more modesty, and perhaps with a more timid spirit. You had men of high position, ministers of state, and other distinguished persons among the educated and influential classes of society, adopting these opinions in the reign of George I. What happened? A century passed away, and what permanent effect was produced by these opinions, although they produced a literature of their own, which was second to none in acuteness and learning, and although they were sanctioned by persons in high places? What have been the consequences, I will not say to the Church of England, but to the faith accepted by that church? Why, there never was a period in which the religion of this country, and especially the religion embalmed in the offices of the Church of England, was more influential, or more expansive, or flourished more than in the century that has elapsed since that time. And I defy any one to bring me passages impugning the faith of the Scriptures in any works recently published, in which these doctrines are urged with more power

\* An allusion to the Colenso case.

or more learning than by the writers of that period.

"But then it may be said that England is an insular country, and that Englishmen are a peculiar people; that they have an aristocracy, and a church possessing territorial power; that the middle classes are bigoted, and the aristocratic classes interested in preserving the church; and that by a combination of circumstances it has happened that a natural result has not been attained. But we have seen the same causes at work on a much larger scale, and at a period more recent, in a neighbouring country—a country that is not insular, that has destroyed its aristocracy, subverted its priesthood, plundered its church, and left no prizes to be competed for in it. We have heard that the reason why there are less candidates for orders in the Church of England is that so many prizes have been taken away. But what happened in the Church of France when all its property had been taken? The whole institutions of the land, ecclesiastical and otherwise, were erased; yet as if by magic, parish churches have re-appeared in the 30,000 districts of France; and although they have had monarchies, empires, and republics, and may have in the future a combination of government which no one can anticipate, yet the Christian church in that country counts at present more powerful and more numerous adherents than ever. Therefore, I say, that it is a great mistake, and an opinion not sanctioned by experience, to suppose that we are encountering a novel and revolutionary phase of opinion; and that in consequence of views which have before this been advanced, have flourished, and then disappeared, the House of Commons is to meet in a panic to revise the great title-deeds of the Church of England, and to say in this hasty moment of the introduction of a new philosophy that the measures taken by the great statesmen and churchmen of the days of the Stuarts at an important crisis were a profound mistake, seeing that they have only secured

for England two centuries of tranquillity and repose! Totally repudiating as materials for legislation on such a subject the passing accidents of the hour, which, however, naturally influence the youthful mind of the country, I will make one remark on the character of the subscription, and on the creeds and articles which are now brought forward as unsuited to the age in which we live. . . . I have not heard from any of the speakers any objection or insinuation against the wisdom of maintaining the church of this country. Well, but what do you mean by a church? I say, No creed! no church! How can you have a church without a creed, articles, formularies, and a subscription? If you object to a creed, to formularies, and to articles, tell us so, and then we shall understand the question before us. We will discuss that question, and the nation must decide which side they will adopt. But if you are to have a church, I maintain you must have symbols of union among those who are in communion with that church. That, I hope, is not bigotry, for we must speak on this subject as politicians, and not intrude our private religious convictions on any member of this House, but consider this weighty matter with reference to the happiness of society, and the means of lofty and virtuous government, by the aid of which we may prevent government from degenerating into a mere machinery of police.

"We are agreed, then, that we shall have a church, and that it shall be maintained. Well, I want to know how are we to have a church without a symbol of union among those who are in communion with it? No one has told us. If we are to have a church without articles, creeds, or formularies, we shall have the most pernicious and the most dangerous institution which ever yet existed in any country, the means of which for evil, under the disposition of able men, are entirely incalculable. . . . I agree with the chancellor of the exchequer—every man



of temperate mind must agree with him—that neither the Articles of the church nor the Prayer-book are perfect. There may be blots in their composition. The Prayer-book may be divine, but it is also human. But I do not see anything in the present state of affairs that justifies the course taken by government. Suppose there were circumstances that justified the course taken by the hon. member for Maidstone, is the course taken by the government that which they ought to follow? I do not think it is. If this House be ever of opinion that the title-deeds of the church require to be revised, in however modified a manner, it does appear to me that the inquiry should not originate in either House of Parliament. It has been said in the course of this debate that the Act of Uniformity at present in question is an Act of parliament, and that as it originated in parliament, its revision and formal reconstruction ought to take place there. With regard to that, I say the character of parliament in the reign of Charles II. and of Victoria is decidedly and essentially different. Parliament is no longer a lay synod, and therefore it cannot of right and with propriety assume such a function. No doubt, if a revision were to take place, the opinion of parliament must ultimately be given on the general merits of the question. But it would not enter into every ecclesiastical detail and religious difference of opinion, if for no other reason, from that innate sense of propriety which always guides it. But, I say, if revision be necessary, it is from the temporal head of our church that measure should flow, and by the queen, and by the queen alone, it should be indicated. A royal commission is the proper medium by which any change which may be necessary either in the Articles or Liturgy of the church could alone be brought under the consideration of authority.

“What authority?” The hon. member for Poole (Mr. Henry Seymour) says, ‘Who would trust the discussion of this question to convocation? I regret that convocation has

ever been called into existence, and I trust its attributes and functions will soon be terminated.’ [*Cheers from below the gangway on the government side.*] I cannot agree with that opinion; I cannot sympathize with that cheer. It seems to me—and I say it with the greatest courtesy—extremely bigoted and narrow-minded. Why should convocation be silenced? Convocation is a representative body, and should therefore recommend itself to the Liberal party; it is a body which carries on its affairs by public discussion, and therefore should be regarded, I think, with some respect by those who are devoted to reformed parliaments. And I must say this of convocation: I admit that, as at present constituted, there are elements which render convocation not altogether a satisfactory tribunal. But it does not follow that convocation should be therefore altogether abrogated. Let us be just to convocation. It was recalled into existence after a long lapse of time;\* it was unused to the functions which it was summoned to exercise; it consisted entirely of clergymen, and loud were the predictions that it would fail, and fail ignominiously. But I ask sensible and temperate men on both sides of the House, is it fair to give that character to the labours of convocation since it has been revived? I say myself, revived as it has been after a long desuetude, trammelled as it has been, checked and controlled as it has been in a manner that would have broken the spirit and crushed

\* It was in the year 1851 that the agitation commenced to revive convocation. A clerical meeting was held in Freemason's Hall, January 14, 1851, to address the crown for the revival of Convocation. The two houses of convocation met February 5, 1851, but on the Lower House attempting to discuss a petition to the archbishop, lamenting the suppression of synodical action, the assembly was prorogued. In the House of Lords, July 11, 1851, Lord Redesdale urged the revival of convocation; he was supported by the Archbishops of London and Oxford, and opposed by the Archbishop of Canterbury, who feared that such revival would engender dissensions and controversy. It was through the action of the Conservative party that convocation was revived. When Lord Derby was in power in 1852 he advised the crown to issue a license permitting convocation to resume its synodical functions; accordingly convocation assembled November 5, 1852, “for the despatch of divers urgent business.” The last meeting of convocation before this date was in the year 1717.

the energies of any assembly, it has done many things deserving approval, and what is more, has done that which all predicted it would not do in the brief term it has been permitted to exercise its powers—it has shown an extremely practical character. I would wish its basis were more comprehensive, and I cannot see how any appeal could be made to convocation on such a question as that which has formed the subject of controversy to-night, unless that basis were more comprehensive. You must associate with it the other province and the Church of Ireland, and I myself think you ought to introduce something of that lay element to which the Church of England has been so much indebted. Nor do I doubt that there are lay members of the church at the present moment who, from their learning, their knowledge of men, and their high character, might bring to convocation such ability and reputation as Selden and Chillingworth might have brought in former days. But if it be the opinion of government that it is necessary to revise the Liturgy and Articles, they ought to proceed, not by moving the previous question, but by the initiatory act of the crown whom they counsel; and after a royal commission had been instituted and had terminated its labours, the result might with propriety be submitted to a convocation constituted on the broad basis I have indicated. It may be said these are difficult questions; but it is the province of government to cope with difficulties; and whatever the decision arrived at might be, it would be ultimately laid before parliament, for no one contemplates that any decision upon such subjects would be satisfactory unless parliament were consulted.

“We have heard to-night from the hon. member for Pontefract [Mr. Monckton Milnes] a warning not to submit to a sacerdotal despotism. I entirely agree with the hon. gentleman that no evil can perhaps be conceived for any country, but at all events none for a country like England, greater than to fall under a sacerdotal despotism,

or that we should be at all interfered with in our free life by any priestly power. But it appears to me that the hon. member for Pontefract has entirely misapprehended the question upon which he proposed an amendment, and which one would think he did not resolve on until he had given sufficient consideration to the subject. Sir, my idea of a sacerdotal despotism, in the times in which we live, is not that the Inquisition will appear in this country, or that Archbishop Laud, in the form of the mild and benignant metropolitan of Lambeth, may summon us again to a high commission court. But my idea of sacerdotal despotism is this, that a minister of the Church of England, who is appointed to expound doctrine, should deem that he has a right to invent doctrine. That, sir, is the sacerdotal despotism I fear. And it appears to me, that if the course which has been recommended to our consideration to-night is adopted, in that false guise in which such propositions are sometimes exhibited in this House and out of it, we shall not be secure from arriving at such a goal. I warn the House, however improbable it may appear from the seemingly innocent form in which these simple and enlightened propositions have been brought before us, that they are propositions in favour of the priesthood, and not of the laity; and the more their consequences are traced, the more plainly that will be found to be the inevitable result. No doubt there are men of genius among the clergy, fine writers, men of learning and imagination, who can easily picture to themselves what would be the consequence of the success of these endeavours. No doubt the mere clergyman would soon become a prophet. No doubt you would have many churches; and the abounding eloquence, the exquisite learning, the fine sentiment, and the admirable ingenuity, which pervade many of the publications which are put upon our tables, would produce consequences to the Church of England very different from what have proceeded from this reviled Act

of Uniformity. But what I feel is this—if that course be pursued, I see no security for 200 years of tranquillity and toleration. I see no security for 200 years which have resolved as great a problem in spiritual life as we have in political. It is the boast of this country that in politics it has reconciled order with liberty. What in its religious affairs is a greater triumph than this—it has combined orthodoxy with toleration. What security have you for such results if you pursue the course which is insidiously recommended to you now in so many ways and by so many changes? I prefer to stand upon the ancient ground. I see no reason whatever why, if the occasion demands it, our attention should not be duly called to necessary changes in our Articles and Liturgy. But though I see no reason, if the occasion requires it, why that should not be done, I can most sincerely say that hitherto no satisfactory case has been made out in favour of that course. I prefer to stand as we are—on a church which lives in the historic conscience of the country, which comes down with the title-deeds of its great Liturgy which we all can understand, because our fathers and our forefathers have contributed to its creation. Sir, I regret the course which we have taken to-night, although I trust, after this discussion, it will not be misunderstood, and that the country will feel that it is the determination of parliament to stand in its spirit by the Church of England.”

The “previous question” having been put and carried, the resolution of Mr. Buxton fell to the ground.

Looking back upon the past, Mr. Disraeli had no reason to despair of the future of Conservatism. Under his guidance, and impregnated with his teaching, the Conservative party had been slowly but steadily developing into a united and powerful organization. Discarding the Toryism so fashionable in the early part of the nineteenth century, which based its foreign policy upon the articles of the treaty

of Vienna, and its domestic policy upon opposition to all progress, Conservatism, as taught and reduced to its original principles by Mr. Disraeli, clearly and faithfully represented the political creed of the national party. The stability of the throne with a constitutional extension of the prerogative, the maintenance of the union between church and state, the preservation of all that conduced to the strength and the welfare of the established church, the ready advocacy of all measures calculated to promote the good of the people and to harmonize with the national progress consequent upon the increase in the national wealth and the greater educational advantages enjoyed by the country—these were the chief articles in the faith of the party which was called Conservative, but which was really national. It had no sympathy with the exclusiveness of an oligarchy; neither had it sympathy with the destructiveness of a democracy. It steered a middle course between a selfish privilege on one side, and a debasing equality on the other—ever open to redress legitimate grievances, whilst anxious to uphold all that was sound, even though ancient, in the fabric of the constitution. At a dinner of the National Conservative Registration Association, held at Willis’ Rooms (June 26, 1863), Mr. Disraeli spoke at some length upon the past and future of the party. He stated, as he had often before stated, the nature of the differences in the political creed held by the Liberals and the Conservatives. He compared the fortunes of the party some few years ago with its present powerful and united condition. He showed why it had twice been forced to resign office; and he predicted a brilliant and useful future for Conservatism. The remarks he uttered on this occasion, though they have never before been taken out of the limbo of forgotten speeches, are deserving of attention.

“I am reminded,” he said, after having stated that a careful and vigilant registration was an extension of the suffrage of which

all must approve, "I am reminded by the taunts of our opponents that although we are sedulous in recommending the registration of voters, we are in fact only registering electors who, when the crisis arrives, will have no opinions to represent. I am told every day that distinctive opinions and different principles between parties have ceased to exist, and the Liberal party especially are very free in assuring us that there is no longer any contrariety between political sections. Now, I will be more just and more generous to our opponents than they are inclined to be to us. I give them credit for very distinctive principles and for very distinct opinions; and the only remarkable feature in their position at present is, that they do not practise the principles which they profess. The Liberal party are of opinion that the electoral franchise ought to be democratic; we are not. The Liberal party are of opinion that the mode of exercising the suffrage should be so conducted, that property should be deprived of its legitimate influence; we are not. The Liberal party are of opinion that the union between church and state ought to be abolished; we are not. Our colonial empire, which is the national estate that assures to every subject of Her Majesty, as it were, a freehold, and which gives to the energies and abilities of Englishmen an inexhaustible theatre—the Liberal party are of opinion that the relations between the mother country and the people of the colonies should be abrogated; we are not. The Liberal party are opposed to the ancient rights of corporations and to the privileges of endowments, and think they ought to be terminated; we do not. I might pursue the catalogue through all the most considerable features of our social and political system, and point out to you the diametrical differences that exist really and in theory between the two great parties in the state. I admit that these differences at this moment from particular circumstances are not obtruded upon the attention of the legislature, or are only partially attempted to be brought

forward for public sanction. But we should deceive ourselves if we supposed that, because these great questions are suspended, they are therefore concluded. There are particular reasons why at present they can be only partially brought forward; but like the whirlwind of the poet, they 'lie hushed in grim repose,' and the day will come, and perhaps is not far distant, when you will have to encounter their claims and examine their merits.

"What I want is, that when that inevitable hour arrives, the Tory party shall be found prepared—prepared in the discipline of their numbers, but prepared in something to my mind more important than discipline and numbers—in defined opinions and distinctive principles. It has always appeared to me that the great political struggle which has prevailed during the last thirty years is, in fact, a struggle between popular principles and Liberal opinions. The institutions of the country—our ancient and limited, but still real monarchy, our national church, our estates of the realm, our colonial empire, our hereditary tenure of land, our ancient corporations and endowments, the vast and complicated fabric of our local jurisdiction and administration—all involve, represent, and secure popular principles and popular rights. It is by their united aid and agency that we enjoy that security for our persons and our properties, which to the same degree and in the same manner is enjoyed by no other country and by no other state. It is by their united aid and agency that the public liberties are preserved, that an education, secular and spiritual, is provided for the great body of the people, and that the rights of labour and the claims of industry are recognized in the scheme of the constitution. It is, in short, by their united aid and agency that the government of this country is carried on; by the benign assistance of traditionary influence, and not by the rude authority of a systematical police. It is by their agency that the national character has been formed. A professor of

Liberal opinions, on the other hand, is an individual who is of opinion that he ought to be liberated from the control of these institutions. If he has a republican bias, he is for reducing the sovereign to the position of a chief magistrate. If he be a dissenter, quite forgetful of the indirect advantage of an establishment and a national church even to himself; quite forgetful even of the direct advantage of a national church to the millions of his fellow-subjects—he is desirous of reducing that church to the position of a rival sect. If the House of Commons is an obstacle to the success of his political schemes, he is for reforming the House of Commons. If he is successful in the House of Commons, and the House of Lords is the obstacle, he will abrogate the House of Lords. To him the colonial empire is only an annual burden. To him corporation is only an equivalent term for monopoly, and endowment for privilege. The tenure of land, which in hours of perplexity, external or domestic, offers something around which men may rally and save the state, is to him only the remains of the feudal system; and as for the great system of our self-government, no one so much as the professor of liberal opinions is happier in showing you the imperfections necessarily inseparable from the political scheme, or who proves with such irresistible logic that the whole thing can be done much better and much cheaper by a system of centralized administration founded on the principle of competitive examination.

“Gentlemen, the Tory party is only in its proper position when it represents popular principles. Then it is truly irresistible. Then it can uphold the throne and the altar, the majesty of the empire, the liberty of the nation, and the rights of the multitude. There is nothing mean, petty, or exclusive, about the real character of Toryism. It necessarily depends upon enlarged sympathies and noble aspirations, because it is essentially national. The moment that Toryism deviates from that

great fundamental principle it is in danger. From that moment Liberalism flourishes, for Liberalism is the consequence of our errors, and often their corrective. We have every reason to congratulate the Tory party upon their present position. Let me recall to your memory the state of the Tory party only some few years ago. Why, only twelve years ago there was no record in the history of England of a political connection so utterly forlorn, so hopeless, so prostrate, as was then the Tory party. That eminent man, whose great sagacity and great heart had rallied us round him at a moment of unforeseen and unprecedented difficulties, had just met an untimely end. I will never mention his name, or recall his memory, without expressing the sentiments of admiration and affection which I feel. At that moment we did not literally count in the House of Commons, by any means, one-fourth of its members. As for our political opinions—that identity of sentiment which is the only foundation of vigorous action in public life—that *idem velle et idem sentire de republicâ*, which is the soul of political existence—we were in this position; we were the representatives of opinions which—that is the cruelest cut of all—had been selected by the distinguished men who were then our leaders as the soundest and most expedient foundation for political action, which we consequently had adopted and pledged ourselves to our countrymen to advocate, and which our countrymen had ratified only recently by a large majority. These opinions had been given up with such precipitation and such panic, that it was impossible to rally the country around a more temperate application of them. These very principles subsequent events proved to be practicable, and when adopted by France, they have led in that country to a great increase of wealth. And yet these principles were suddenly described by our leaders as absurd and impracticable, and which, under the circumstances in which we then found ourselves, it was impossible effectually to rally

the country round. I am not using the language of exaggeration, but of literal and historical truth, when I say there was no man who believed at that time the Tory party would ever rally. The question was, which political section would obtain the greatest portion of our plunder. We were like a wreck stranded on the beach, and it was a question who should rifle our stores. But contrast that position with our position now! In either house of parliament you confront the ministry with at least an equal power. You are the advocates of a generous and a national creed; and as for public men, why there is not a subject which can be brought forward in the House of Commons, but I am sure from every part of the benches on the side on which I sit men will come forward, who, by the amplitude of their knowledge, their argumentative power, and their general ability, will so demean themselves as to command, as they deserve, the attention of the assembly which they adorn."

Mr. Disraeli then referred to the conduct of the Tory party when in office. Both times, when called to power, they had to face an absolute majority in the House of Commons. Yet they did not flinch; they knew the risks they ran, they were aware of the personal mortification they might encounter, but they did their duty. "And what was the cause of our fall?" asked Mr. Disraeli. "On both occasions there happened that which in the history of this country, rich and long as are its political annals, never before was equalled, for which there is no parallel, and which the future perhaps would have no instance to compare with. We fell before the most peculiar coalition that ever existed, or probably ever can exist, even in England. The Liberal party defeated us in 1852, because they coalesced with the pupils of Sir Robert Peel; and the Liberal party defeated us in 1859, because they coalesced with the pupils of Mr. Bright. But, gentlemen, don't you see the moral of this? The powers of coalition are exhausted. In the purgatory in which the Liberal party

found themselves they first applied to celestial archangels, and then they descended to the lowest abyss of Hades. But a lower abyss there is not. Their means are exhausted. Coalition has nothing to fall back upon. Then I tell you, and I tell the country this, for it is an important truth, that in a country like England a coalition produces the same effect, as in continental lands is produced by a *coup d'état*. It suspends political life, and from such a state of affairs there is an inevitable reaction which no nation can escape. That reaction will come in countries where *coups d'état* have succeeded, as it will come in countries which are still ruled by the remnants of exhausted coalitions. But when that inevitable reaction comes, it is the duty of the Tory party to be prepared."

The speaker thus concluded, and in his closing remarks we see the patience and the courage of the man who was never disheartened by defeat, or by long exclusion from office:—"If during a long period you have endured mortification and disappointment, if you have been betrayed by those in whom you have trusted, if for a moment the principles which bind you together seem to be loosed, I trust that the moral experience of those years has brought you back to a due sense of the true value and eternal character of the principles by which a great national party in England can alone be maintained. I am so persuaded of the truth of this, that I can say that I have never looked upon the past with those feelings of disappointment which many of my companions entertained. I felt that the circumstances under which our political connection was first formed were most rare and remarkable, and I knew that a hard trial must be undergone before we were approved for the trust to which we aspired. When there have been murmurs at delay, I myself only saw preparation; even where there has been discomfiture, I have only recognized progress. I know of no time when the principles of the Tory party were more clear in the appreciation of that party and of the country."

Parliament was prorogued by commission July 28, 1863. The message from the crown was chiefly occupied in dealing with foreign politics. "Her Majesty," it said, "has seen with deep regret the present condition of Poland. Her Majesty has been engaged, in concert with the Emperor of the French and the Emperor of Austria, in negotiations, the object of which has been to obtain the fulfilment of the stipulations of the Treaty of Vienna of 1815 in behalf of the Poles. Her Majesty trusts that those stipulations will be carried into execution, and that thus a conflict distressing to humanity and dangerous to the tranquillity of Europe may be brought to a close. The civil war between the Northern and Southern states of the North American Union still, unfortunately, continues, and is necessarily attended with much evil, not only to the contending parties, but also to nations which have taken no part in the contest. Her Majesty, however, has seen no reason to depart from that strict neutrality which Her Majesty has observed from the beginning of the contest. The Greek nation having chosen Prince William of Denmark for their king, Her Majesty is taking steps with a view to the union of the Ionian Islands to the kingdom of Greece. For this purpose Her Majesty is in communication with the powers who were parties to the treaty of 1815, by which those islands were placed under the protection of the British crown; and the wishes of the Ionians on the subject of such union will be duly ascertained. Several barbarous outrages committed in Japan upon British subjects have rendered it necessary for Her Majesty to demand reparation, and Her Majesty hopes that her demands will be conceded by the Japanese government, without its being necessary to resort to coercive measures to enforce them. The Emperor of Brazil has thought fit to break off his diplomatic relations with Her Majesty, in consequence of Her Majesty not having complied with demands which she did not deem it possible to accede to.

Her Majesty has no wish that this estrangement should continue, and would be glad to see her relations with Brazil re-established.\* The message concluded by stating that the general prosperity of the empire continued unimpaired. The session had been dull and uneventful, and few measures of any importance received the royal assent. The contested questions of reform and ballot had for the moment been set on one side, and both parties had now resolved, so far as legislation was concerned, to "rest and be thankful."

During the autumn various matters occurred which had their influence upon the political history of this country. The Ionian parliament had been dissolved by Sir Henry Storks, and the islands had resolved unanimously in favour of union with Greece. Prince Satsuma, after his city of Kagosima had been bombarded by an English fleet, consented to pay his portion of the indemnity demanded for an attack made upon certain English travellers within the bounds of his jurisdiction, and to do his utmost to apprehend the murderers. Earl Russell, whilst on a visit to Scotland, and at a public dinner given in his honour, expressed his opinion that, so far as reform was concerned, we were at the present entitled "to rest and be thankful"—memorable words which were afterwards frequently brought up against him. The French expedition to Mexico had resulted in the Archduke Maximilian publicly declaring that he would agree to accept the crown of Mexico, provided his election was ratified by a free vote of the whole Mexican people. In order to settle the various international difficulties that had of late years arisen, the Emperor of the French issued an invitation to the Euro-

\* Early in the May of 1863 certain Brazilian merchant vessels had been captured by our men-of-war in reprisal of insults offered to three officers of H.M.S. *Forte*, and of the pillage of the British trading vessel, the *Prince of Wales*, which had been shipwrecked on the coast of Brazil. The Brazilian minister in London had paid to the English government £3200 as an indemnity. On the English government refusing to express regret to Brazil for reprisals, diplomatic intercourse between the two countries was suspended. Amicable relations were restored August. 1865.

pean sovereigns to assemble in congress at Paris. "Called to the throne," he wrote to Her Majesty, "by Providence and the will of the French people, but trained in the school of adversity, it is perhaps less allowable for me than for others to ignore the rights of sovereigns and the legitimate aspirations of the people. Thus I am ready, without any preconceived system, to bring to an international council a spirit of moderation and justice, the ordinary portion of those who have undergone so many different trials. If I take the initiative in such an overture, I do not yield to an impulse of vanity, but because I am the sovereign to whom ambitious projects have mostly been attributed. I have it at heart to prove, by this frank and loyal overture, that my sole object is to arrive, without convulsion, at the pacification of Europe. If this proposal be agreed to, I beg your Majesty to accept Paris as the place of meeting. If the princes, allies and friends of France, should think fit to enhance by their presence the authority of the deliberations, I shall be proud to offer them cordial hospitality. Europe will, perhaps, see some advantage in the capital whence the signal of confusion has so often arisen becoming the seat of conferences destined to lay the basis of a general pacification. I take this opportunity of renewing to you the assurances of the high esteem and inviolable friendship with which I am, Madam my Sister, your Majesty's good brother—NAPOLÉON."

This invitation was declined. "Not being able," wrote Earl Russell in reply, "to discern the likelihood of those beneficial consequences which the Emperor of the French promised himself when proposing a congress, Her Majesty's government, following their own strong convictions, after mature deliberation feel themselves unable to accept His Imperial Majesty's invitation."

The one subject in which public interest now centred was, however, the Schleswig-Holstein question, which had once more arisen. To understand this *bête noire* of

diplomacy, we must briefly refer to the past. The Danish monarchy originally consisted of four principal divisions—the kingdom of Denmark proper, the duchy of Schleswig, the duchy of Holstein, and the duchy of Lauenburg. Denmark proper and Schleswig formed together the original Danish realm, whilst Holstein and Lauenburg were German territories acquired since, and known as the "German duchies" of the King of Denmark. The duchy of Schleswig was originally a part of the Danish province of Jutland, which afterwards became a fief of the Danish crown. In 1459 it escheated to the crown, but was maintained as a separate fief, and was soon afterwards divided between the three principal branches of the house of Oldenburg, the Royal Danish, the Gottorp, and the Sönderborg branches. For a short period the share of the Duke of Gottorp was almost separated from Denmark; but in 1721 the whole duchy was again made by letters patent an integral part of the Danish state. The duchy of Holstein was a fief of the German empire until 1806, when it was united to the body politic of the Danish monarchy by letters patent. The duchy of Lauenburg was acquired in 1815, and for ever incorporated into the Danish monarchy by letters patent. Such briefly is the history of the duchies.

In 1848 an insurrectionary German party, known as the Schleswig Holstein party, appealed to Germany for aid in establishing the union of the two duchies of Holstein and Schleswig, with a separate constitutional existence from the rest of the monarchy. Germany assisted the insurrection, and after a struggle of nearly three years, the peace of Berlin was signed July 2, 1850, by which Germany withdrew from the war, and agreed to pacify Holstein. After considerable delay, on the application of Denmark, a German army of "execution" marched into Holstein and occupied the duchy. When the pacification of Holstein was effected, Germany refused to withdraw her troops, and to rein-



state the King of Denmark in his full sovereign authority in Holstein and Lauenburg, until the Danish government had given certain assurances as to the system of government intended to be followed in those duchies, and also in the Danish duchy of Schleswig. This led to much diplomatic correspondence in 1851-52, which resulted in Denmark pledging herself to the following:—1. That Schleswig should not be incorporated with Denmark proper. 2. That Denmark should establish an organic constitutional connection of all parts of the country, so as to form a united monarchy, in which no part was subordinate to the other. 3. That Denmark should extend equal protection to both the German and Danish nationalities in Schleswig. This third clause, however, Denmark afterwards denied having made.

On January 28, 1852, the King of Denmark promulgated a proclamation, in which he announced to his subjects the basis on which he intended to reconstitute the Danish monarchy. This proclamation was approved of by the Germanic Diet, and the King of Denmark was reinstated in Holstein and Lauenburg, with full sovereign authority. The steps taken by Denmark to carry out this proclamation were:—1. The revival of the provincial assemblies called Estates, which Holstein and Schleswig had possessed previous to 1848, with a jurisdiction limited only to local affairs. 2. The reduction of the parliament of Denmark proper, from being a parliament for the whole non-German portion of the monarchy, to that of a provincial assembly, confined to the local affairs of that province. 3. A constitution for the whole monarchy was enacted; this constitution established under the name of "Rigsraad," or Council of the Realm, a general legislative assembly for the whole monarchy, based upon the equal representation of all parts of the monarchy, according to the ratio of population and taxation. The Germanic Diet now interfered, and required the abrogation of this constitution, but limited

its demand to the duchies of Holstein and Lauenburg, over which districts the Diet was alone entitled to exercise any control. After various futile negotiations, the Danish government, by an ordinance dated November 6, 1858, acceded to the demands of the Diet: thus Holstein and Lauenburg were put out of all constitutional union with the other parts of the Danish monarchy, being placed under the absolute authority of the sovereign, and the jurisdiction of their assemblies strictly limited to local affairs.

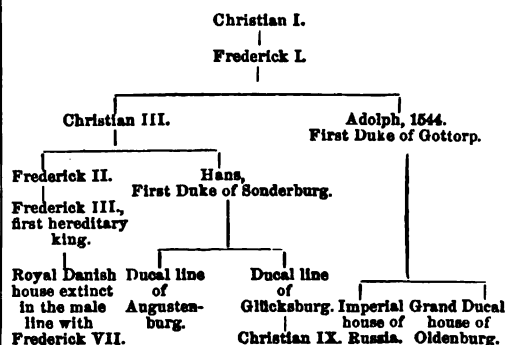
The Holstein assembly now revived the pretensions of 1848-50 regarding a constitutional union with Schleswig, and refused all overtures for a general constitution. While this question was being discussed, the Germanic Diet required of Denmark that the assembly of the duchy of Holstein should exercise the same powers as the Rigsraad, in controlling the government of the whole monarchy. This demand, owing to the mediation of Great Britain, was compromised, by limiting the contributions of Holstein towards the general expenditure of the monarchy to the sums fixed by the normal budget of 1856. In March, 1863, the Danish government decreed an ordinance that no law should be valid in Holstein which had not obtained the sanction of that duchy, and that in case of disagreement between the assembly of Holstein and the Rigsraad, a separate legislature for Holstein, on the part of the Holstein assembly, should take place. To this Germany objected, regarding the latter decree as a means for paving the way for a complete separation of Holstein, in point of legislation and of administration, from the rest of the monarchy. Germany regarded it as a violation of federal rights, and of the treaties of 1852. On November 18, 1863, the Danish government made certain alterations in the constitution of 1855, with respect to Denmark proper and Schleswig, which tended to increase all the more the interference of Austria and Prussia.

At this juncture the death of the King

of Denmark caused the Schleswig-Holstein question to assume a new and most complicated aspect. Frederick VII. of Denmark had no heirs, and by the treaty of London (May 8, 1852) between England, Russia, Sweden, France, and Prussia, on the one hand, and Denmark on the other, it had been settled that, in default of male issue in the direct line of Frederick III. of Denmark, the Danish crown should descend to the issue of Prince Christian of Schleswig-Holstein and his consort Louisa, Princess of Hesse, in order of primogeniture from male to male; and also provided for the continued union of all the states then united under the sceptre of the King of Denmark. Accordingly on the death of Frederick VII., and in conformity with the provisions of the treaty of London, Prince Christian (the father of the Princess of Wales) ascended the Danish throne as King Christian IX. His claim to a portion of his territories was at once contested by the Duke of Augustenburg, who insisted on his right to be recognized Duke of Schleswig-Holstein. Unfortunately for the legality of the duke's claim, the late Duke of Augustenburg had promised (December 30, 1852) for himself and family not to disturb the tranquillity, nor to oppose "the arrangement of the succession to all the lands now united under His Majesty's sceptre," and had accepted from the Danish government a sum of 3,500,000 dollars in compensation for the surrender of his claims. The son, however, now declined to be bound by this renunciation, and it suited the policy of Germany to support his claim. By the treaty of London the succession had been secured to Christian IX., whose queen would have been entitled, after the death of Frederick VII., to reign over Denmark proper and Schleswig, only her majesty had yielded her rights to her husband. With regard to Holstein, the legal heir to that duchy, after the sovereigns of Denmark, was the late Emperor of Russia.

In 1851, however, the Czar had ceded his rights of inheritance to the present dynasty.\* The dispute now came before the Frankfort Diet, and it was discussed whether there should be administration of the government in the duchies of Holstein and Lauenburg, without reference to the contested right of succession; or whether the Diet should enter into hostile occupation of the duchies, and hold them until it had decided to whom they rightfully belonged. Austria and Prussia voted for the first measure, and the committee of the Diet in favour of the last. In the end the Austro-Prussian demand was carried by a small majority voting for what was called occupation, which was to give the Diet the right of determining the succession. Accordingly the Danish government was summoned to withdraw its troops from the duchies of Holstein and Lauenburg. Denmark, under the impression that England would not desert her, declined to obey, and war seemed imminent. Holstein refused to pay homage to King Christian, and publicly proclaimed the Duke of Augustenburg as Duke of Schleswig-Holstein by the title of Frederick VIII. Prussia and Austria were busy arming, determined to uphold the Augustenburg claim. Before the year closed it became known that the ultimatum addressed to Denmark had been rejected, and that the allied Prussian and Austrian army were marching north to enter Holstein.

\* The following table may assist our view :—



## CHAPTER XX.

### THE DANO-GERMAN QUESTION.

ON the assembling of parliament (Feb. 4th, 1864) the important question of the hour was the dispute between Denmark and Germany. Domestic politics at this time offered little opportunity for discussion. Lord Palmerston was in power; the country was content with his rule; he was an old man and both parties in the state had, as it were, tacitly agreed to defer all burning questions of legislation until the end of his political life, which could not be far distant, had arrived, and a younger and more vigorous chief stood at the head of affairs. The nation was to enter upon a period of repose; and for a time "rest and be thankful" was to be the policy of the legislature. Save the various complications on the continent, there was nothing at home to keenly interest English politicians. Trade was brisk, the revenue, in spite of all past alarms, was flourishing, the distress in Lancashire was decreasing, the country was at peace with all its foreign neighbours; and as to the few additions that were to be made to the statute-book, they excited little attention and were but coldly received. The only one domestic event about which there was any enthusiasm, and the enthusiasm it kindled was great, was that an heir had been born to the throne. "Her Majesty is confident," said the royal speech, "that you will share her feeling of gratitude to Almighty God on account of the Princess of Wales having given birth to a son—an event which has called forth from her faithful people renewed demonstrations of devoted loyalty and attachment to her person and family." Lord Derby, in his criticism of the speech from the throne gracefully alluded to this joyous fact. "It appears to me," he said, "that as

we advance in life we look with a warmer and kindlier sympathy upon the opening prospects of those who are entering upon that career, towards the close of which so many of us are hurrying. But I am sure there is not one of your lordships who does not view with the deepest interest the happy career of that youthful pair, upon the birth of whose heir we are now congratulating the sovereign. I am sure there is not one of your lordships who does not offer up a fervent prayer to the Throne of Grace that that bright prospect may remain unclouded, and that long after the youngest of your lordships have passed away from this scene, the throne of these realms may be occupied by the descendants of the illustrious prince and his new-born heir. *'Et nati natorum. et qui nascentur ab illis.'*"

It was, however, in the development of foreign politics that the chief interest of the nation was centred. "The state of affairs on the continent of Europe," said the royal speech, "has been the cause of great anxiety to Her Majesty. The death of the late King of Denmark brought into immediate application the stipulations of the treaty of May, 1852, concluded by Her Majesty, the Emperor of Austria, the Emperor of the French, the King of Prussia, the Emperor of Russia, the King of Sweden, and the King of Denmark, and afterwards acceded to by the King of Hanover, the King of Saxony, the King of Wurtemberg, the King of the Belgians, the King of the Netherlands, the Queen of Spain, the King of Portugal, and the King of Sardinia. That treaty declared that it is conducive to the preservation of the balance of power and of the peace of Europe that the integrity of the Danish monarchy should be maintained, and that the several

territories which have hitherto been under the sway of the King of Denmark, should continue so to remain; and for this purpose it was agreed that in the event of the death of the late king and of his uncle Prince Frederick without issue, his present Majesty King Christian IX. should be acknowledged as successor to all the dominions then united under the sceptre of His Majesty the King of Denmark. Her Majesty, actuated by the same desire to preserve the peace of Europe, which was one of the declared objects of all the powers who were parties to that treaty, has been unremitting in her endeavours to bring about a peaceful settlement of the differences which on this matter have arisen between Germany and Denmark, to ward off the dangers which might follow from a beginning of warfare in the north of Europe, and Her Majesty will continue her efforts in the interest of peace."

On the matter coming before parliament, the conduct of the foreign secretary in dealing with these questions during the past autumn was severely criticised by the Conservative party in both houses. The Palmerston cabinet, true to their foreign policy of verbal interference and practical inactivity, had behaved to Denmark as they had formerly behaved to Italy. The Danes had been freely treated to advice, had been encouraged to resist, had been informed that right was on their side, had perused despatches abusing the action of Prussia and Austria, had been assured, if words signified anything, of the support of England; and then, when attacked by the foe, had been left single-handed to fight out a terribly unequal conflict. The phrase, "meddle and muddle," will long be remembered; it originated on this occasion. "The foreign policy of the noble earl" (Russell), said Lord Derby, "as far as the principle of non-intervention is concerned, may be summed up in two truly expressive words—"meddle" and "muddle." During the whole course of his diplomatic correspondence, wherever he has interfered—and he has interfered everywhere—he has

been lecturing, scolding, blustering, and—retreating. Seriously, for though there may be something ludicrous about it, the matter is of too great importance to be treated only in a light and jocular manner, I cannot but feel as an Englishman that I am lowered and humiliated in my own estimation and in that of other nations, by the result of the noble earl's administration of foreign affairs. Thanks to the noble earl and the present government, we have at this moment not one single friend in Europe: and more than that, this country, the chief fault of which was that it went too direct and straightforward at what it aimed; which never gave a promise without the intention of performing; which never threatened without a full determination of striking; which never made a demand without being prepared to enforce it—this country is now in such a position, that its menaces are disregarded, its magniloquent language is ridiculed, and its remonstrances are treated with contemptuous indifference, by the small as well as by the great powers of the continent."

In the lower House the censure passed by the leader of the Opposition was equally scathing. Mr. Disraeli carefully criticised the speech of the lords commissioners; but before dealing with what it contained, he touched upon what it omitted. He regretted that no allusion had been made to the distress existing in Ireland, and to the patient and exemplary manner in which such distress had been borne. It was also strange that no mention had been made of the United States. The relations between England and the United States were at that moment very intimate and had been very active; and some expression of opinion on the part of the government as to the probable duration of the civil war would have been welcomed by the country. It would also have been satisfactory to know that the principle of strict neutrality was still the principle of the policy of the government, so far as the United States were concerned; and that during the recess it had been rigorously observed and strictly acted upon.

He would also liked to have heard mention made of China and Poland. Taking a general view of their external relations at the present time, what struck him most was their utter confusion. Everthing was in an inconsistent condition—sometimes approaching even to the incoherent. Everthing appeared to be done with a total want of system, and without a definite object in view. Witness the conduct of the government towards Russia when the Polish insurrection broke out, and the conditions which had been pressed upon the young King of Greece in return for the cession of the Ionian Islands. Nor could he congratulate the government upon their tact in replying to the request of the Emperor of the French for a congress to assemble at Paris. "A good understanding," said Mr. Disraeli, "between England and France is simply this—that so far as the influence of these two great powers extends, the affairs of the world shall be conducted by their co-operation instead of by their rivalry. But co-operation requires not merely identity of interest, but reciprocal good feeling. In public as well as in private affairs, a certain degree of sentiment is necessary for the happy conduct of matters. A kind thing, for instance, ought not to be done in a rough manner, and if possible a rough thing ought to be done in a kind manner. The feelings of nations must be considered. Now the position of the Emperor of the French, at the end of last year, everybody knows was a distrustful one. The Emperor of the French had held out expectations which he could not fulfil, and he had been worsted in the diplomatic encounter. If ever a sovereign was in a situation in which he might count on the sympathy of an ally, it was the Emperor of the French; but especially an ally who had very much encouraged him in the erroneous course he had taken. I look upon the proposition for a congress to have been an adroit manœuvre. Amid a burst of martial music and the roll of artillery the Emperor of the French would

have retreated with flying colours. The proposition itself was deficient in soundness . . . Far from disapproving of Her Majesty's government declining to attend the proposed congress, giving them credit for the validity of the reasons which induced them to take that course, I cannot extend the like approbation to the manner and to the mode in which their refusal was conveyed. The position of the Emperor of the French is peculiar. He has publicly, almost ostentatiously, proclaimed it to Europe, and therefore there can be no indelicacy in referring to it. He is not, as he has told you, like other emperors—like the Emperor of Austria or of Russia. He does not stand upon tradition. He is not hedged in by the magic of prescriptive right. He has been created and can only be maintained by the sympathies of his people—a proud, imperious, and apt to be discontented people. Humiliate the idol, and the worshippers become disquieted and indignant. A considerate ally ought to have remembered this. But an ally who had encouraged the very policy which had involved the Emperor of the French in his difficulties—an ally who had been the partaker of his projects and a full sharer of his diplomatic discomfiture—such an ally ought not to have received his proposition of a congress in a spirit of cynical criticism. Sarcasm is no doubt a great ornament of debate, and is recognized as an efficient weapon of rhetoric. But the natural language of diplomacy is conciliation, and it is to be regretted that secretaries of state, when they convey to foreign powers the decisions of sovereigns and cabinets, should find no happier medium of expression than a sneer." \*

\* "I totally deny that there was anything discourteous said or meant in the answer. The habits of this country are perhaps more plain and simple in giving expression to their opinions than those of continental nations. We state our opinions and we give our reasons; but we do not often abound in those superfluous expressions of compliment which we are accustomed to hear from our neighbours. But there is nothing in that answer which can with any semblance of justice be called uncourteous, uncivil, unfriendly, or otherwise than was due between two governments which are upon a footing of reciprocal confidence." — *Lord Palmerston, House of Commons, Feb. 4th, 1864.*

Mr. Disraeli then came to the subject which absorbed almost the only important part of the speech—the Schleswig-Holstein dispute. And here again, he said, were exhibited a confusion, an inconsistency of conduct, a contrariety of courses with regard to the great powers, and a total lack of diplomatic system. He referred to the despatch of Earl Russell, September 24, 1862, when Denmark was recommended to give to Holstein and Lauenberg all that the German confederation had asked for them, and to accord to Schleswig self-government—advice which led the extreme German party to conclude that they possessed the support of England. Then in striking contrast to the tenor of that despatch, he alluded to the burning words of Lord Palmerston at the close of the last session, when Mr. Horsman had brought the subject of Schleswig-Holstein before the House. “Now what was the speech of the Prime Minister?” asked Mr. Disraeli. “I give no opinion whatever as to the justness or expediency of the course he recommended, any more than I do of the despatch of the secretary of state for foreign affairs. I would, however, appeal to any one who listened on that occasion to the speech of the prime minister, in which he declared, while duly acknowledging the relations of Holstein to the German Diet, that if the border was passed Denmark would find that she was not alone in the quarrel—I ask the House, I ask both sides of the House with equal confidence—whether the necessary effect of that speech was not, what we all know now it was, to encourage a party that never required any encouragement, namely, the extreme Danish party. Therefore you see in this grave question of Germany and Denmark the same confusion, the same inconsistency, the same incoherency, and the same oppositeness, which I have traced throughout in the diplomatic conduct of Her Majesty’s government.

“This despatch and this speech,” he continued, “having worked, one to encourage Germany to take an extravagant

view, and the other to support Denmark in a view equally irrational, we now find the question discussed in the speech of the lords commissioners. I do not doubt that these three paragraphs are perfectly familiar to every hon. gentleman. The third, fourth, and fifth paragraphs of the speech from the throne, the three most important paragraphs in this speech, are in fact a statement of premisses. They are premisses drawn up with great art, and no doubt for very great objects. They were drawn up to impress on the country and upon Europe the solemn and important engagements that have been entered into by all the principal crowned heads of Europe. It reads, in fact, like the *Almanach de Gotha*. First of all there is the treaty; then the style and names of the sovereigns; then the policy is brought forward, which was the preservation of the balance of power and of the peace of Europe, by the maintenance of the integrity of the Danish monarchy; and that in order to do this his present Majesty King Christian should be acknowledged as successor to all the dominions of the late king of Denmark. Now, having brought forward all these premisses, what is the conclusion that has been drawn from them? It cannot be found in the speech, because the third paragraph ends only, ‘And Her Majesty will continue her efforts in the interest of peace.’ The logical conclusion of these three paragraphs is to be found in the speech which the noble lord at the head of the government made in this House on the last day of last session—that in consequence of this treaty, in consequence of the admission into this treaty of all the sovereigns of Europe, in consequence of the vital interests involved in that treaty, Denmark, if an act of violence was committed against her (for that was the language of the noble viscount)—Denmark was not to find herself alone in the contest. But here we have these pompous premisses; and what is the conclusion in the speech? Why, ‘that Her Majesty will continue her

efforts in the interest of peace.' The interest of peace! Why, would any stranger who had listened to the speech of the lords commissioners to-day, and had no other knowledge on the subject, believe that when they thus referred to Germany, the Eider had actually been passed, that blood had been shed, that perhaps at this moment a great engagement was taking place?"\*

The truth was, declared Mr. Disraeli, that all this confusion and inconsistency were due to the government not knowing what to do in the matter; they had no policy, but they trusted that by consulting parliament a policy would be framed for them by the House of Commons. "I for one," cried the leader of the Opposition, "will not help the government out of the difficulties in which they find themselves, by coming forward with a cut and dried policy to settle all the differences of Europe. The condition of Europe is, no doubt, one of a grave character; and upon the conduct of the English government and upon the conduct of parliament much depends. But it is for the government to frame a policy and recommend it to us; and I have no doubt that when it is brought before us, if it be a wise policy, the House will unanimously support them; for I have always seen that when foreign affairs have occupied the attention of the House there has been an absence of party strife. But let us be sure about the policy we are pursuing. Let us be quite sure if we go to war, first of all, that it is a necessary and just war; and secondly, if now necessary, whether it might not have been prevented by more skilful management. Her Majesty's government, through this particular business of Germany and Denmark, much resembles a certain Danish prince. He was not a prince of Augustenburg nor a prince of Glucksburg, but one whose name will probably survive

them both. That important Dane was 'infirm of purpose:'—

'The times are out of joint: O cursed spite!  
That ever I was born to set it right.'

But you are ministers to set them right, and I do protest against you coming to parliament in a critical state of affairs without a policy. If you have a policy, let it be brought forward fairly and candidly; do not come masked and vizored here without our knowing whether, in your opinion, the claims of Denmark are just, or the claims of Germany can be defended. . . . If the policy of the government is clear and well considered, then they will be supported. But if they have no policy; if they are at this critical moment without allies, looking for the vague sympathies of parliament to guide and support them—then I say they are taking an unworthy course, that they are unfit for the offices which they fill and the places they occupy; and if it is proved that this is the state of affairs, I do not believe that parliament will hesitate to express its opinion on their conduct."

Meanwhile unhappy Denmark, allured to resistance and then deserted in the hour of her unequal struggle, had to face her foes with such resources as she possessed. Her courage was high, her cause just, her troops well officered and animated by the fiercest patriotism; yet against such unfair odds there could be but one end. The Danes were everywhere defeated, Eckenforde was taken, Missunde was bombarded and burnt, the Dannewerke which protected Schleswig was abandoned, Schleswig was occupied by the foe; then came the engagements at Wielhoi, Sandberg, and Rackebull, and at Sonderbygaard and Veill, the bombardment of Sonderborg and the retreat from Fredericia; before the end of April the whole of Jutland was in the hands of the allied Prussians and Austrians.

Whilst public interest was being warmly enlisted in favour of the weaker side, and subscriptions were freely raised in aid of the

\* This speech was delivered February 4; three days before the Prussians had entered Schleswig and taken Eckenforde.

wounded Danes, an event occurred which turned attention from Copenhagen to Paris, and finally led to the retirement of one of the subordinates in the ministry. At the trial in Paris of Greco and others for conspiring to assassinate the Emperor of the French,\* it was stated by the Procureur-Impérial in his speech that a paper had been found in the possession of one of the accused persons, directing him to write for money to a Mr. Flowers, at 35 Thurloe Square, Brompton, where a member of the English parliament resided, who in 1855 had been appointed banker to the Tibaldi conspirators. Mr. Cox, the member for Finsbury, first referred to the matter incidentally, when Mr. Stansfeld, who held office as one of the lords of the Admiralty, indignantly repudiated the statement made by the Procureur-Impérial. It was quite true, he said, that he lived at No. 35 Thurloe Square, Brompton, but he knew nothing whatever of the prisoner Greco, or of Mr. Flowers, whose letters were addressed to his house. He had, however, been on intimate terms with M. Mazzini for the past eighteen years, and he held the character of the Italian in high esteem.

The boasted intimacy of one holding office under the crown with a man who openly advocated assassination when necessary for state purposes, was not likely to pass without comment. Sir Henry Stracey accordingly moved "That the speech of the Procureur-Impérial on the trial of Greco, implicating a member of this House and of Her Majesty's government in the plot for the assassination of our ally, the Emperor of the French, deserves the serious consideration of this House." In defence of his colleague Lord Palmerston stated that he considered the explanation of Mr. Stansfeld perfectly satisfactory, and that he had not thought it his duty to communicate with the French government on the matter. "I should have been fairly humiliated," he

said, "if I had been a party to a communication to the French government, to tell them that an English gentleman, a member of parliament holding office under the government, was not connected with an infamous plot against the emperor's life." Mr. Disraeli rose (March 17, 1864) to make a few remarks upon the occasion. He failed to understand why the dread of humiliation should have deterred Lord Palmerston from communicating with the French government upon the subject. The prime minister was the head of a government who, when they had felt it to be their duty, had not permitted the word "humiliation" to induce them to refrain from a course which they deemed to be expedient. "But, says the noble lord with heedless rhetoric," proceeded Mr. Disraeli, "what had we to complain of? Are we to apply to a foreign government because one of my colleagues has been accused by some foreign official of that which he did not perpetrate, and which he has openly denied? Why, sir, this leads us, after all the noise of the noble lord, to recur to the real question before us. The statement of the noble lord proved that he did not understand the very point upon which, of all others, he should have directed the judgment of the House. Let us see, in the first place, what occurred. The Procureur-Général, the attorney-general of a foreign country, makes a public statement in a court of the highest consideration in France, and what is the statement? He says that a member of the British parliament, and what perhaps he was not aware of at the time, a member of the administration, had been, he was sorry to say, the medium by which Mazzini communicated with the conspirators against the life of his sovereign. Did the hon. member for Halifax (Mr. Stansfeld) deny the statement? Why, he admitted it and he explained it. He told us the letters came to his house; he, sitting by the side of the noble lord who has misstated his whole case, does not deny that letters did come, and that his house in

\* Four Italians, named Greco, Imperatori, Trabucco, and Scaglioni, were arrested at Paris, December 29, 1863, on a charge of conspiring against the life of the emperor.



Thurloe Square was the medium for communication between Mazzini and his correspondents. Does he deny that?"

Mr Stansfeld—"What correspondents?"

"What correspondents!" indignantly cried Mr. Disraeli. "You know them better than I do, I suppose. 'What correspondents?' asks the member for Halifax. Why, the assassins of Europe. 'What correspondents?' asks the member for Halifax. Why, the advocates of anarchy throughout the continent. 'What correspondents?' asks the member for Halifax. Why, the men who point their poniards at the breast of our allies. Why, this is the most unfortunate movement on the part of the noble lord I have ever witnessed."

The prime minister, continued Mr. Disraeli, had made a great mistake. He had failed to perform the first duty which civilization, if no other reason, demanded. Sufficient had occurred to require, on the part of the government, a friendly, temperate, dignified, and, if necessary, confidential communication to the foreign government. "Take our own case," instanced Mr. Disraeli. "Supposing the attorney-general here had made a statement, after an important state trial in this country, that he regretted to find that one of the most eminent members of the Chamber of Deputies in France had made his house the machinery of communication between foreigners and conspirators against our sovereign, would you be surprised if the representative of the French emperor were to ask for some explanation of such statement; and if proof had been given of the accuracy of such statement, as has been so lavishly admitted by the noble lord, would it not have been his duty to have expressed his deep regret that such circumstances should have occurred, that such incidents should have happened? Judge by your own feelings what you would have expected the representatives of your sovereign to do." Yet the prime minister had declined to assert

the dignity of the House of Commons, and to make a communication regretting the circumstance! Mr. Disraeli concluded by expressing his intention of supporting the motion of Sir Henry Stracey. On a division, the motion was defeated by a majority of ten.

The subject, however, was not allowed to drop. On the following day Lord Elcho asked the prime minister whether Mr. Stansfeld had tendered his resignation. In reply Lord Palmerston stated that such resignation had been offered, but that he had declined to accept it. Shortly afterwards the prime minister was forced to arrive at a different conclusion. Mr. Stansfeld felt that if he continued in the administration he would lay himself open to a series of attacks which could not but be damaging to the ministry, and he therefore resolved to sever his connection with the government. Speaking from below the gangway, he said there were occasions when it became a man to consult his own sense of right as to the course he should adopt. Such an occasion had now arrived. From what he had seen or read he had become convinced that he had ceased to be any accession to the strength of the government; and as he had reason to fear he might be a source of difficulty and embarrassment to them, it was for himself and not for others to undertake the responsibility of saying that he could not consent to continue to be the cause of embarrassment to an administration which he had decided to support. He had therefore placed his resignation in the hands of the prime minister, and it had been accepted. "I trust," he concluded, "I have made an explanation which will not be deemed unsatisfactory by the House. I have only to add that if any doubts still remain in the minds of any hon. members, I am not only ready, but I invite them to give expression to those doubts, and to enable me at once completely to satisfy them and to answer any questions that they may have to put to me. Meanwhile I leave this question

and throw myself upon the House, and I may add upon my countrymen, with reference to a matter involving that which is every man's dearest inheritance, an unblemished character and a fair name."

Lord Palmerston stanchly supported his late colleague. "My hon. friend," he said, "reminded the House that on a former occasion when he tendered his resignation I declined to accept it, and asked him to continue in office. Upon the present occasion he has left me no alternative. I can only say that I am convinced that the motives which led my hon. friend to take that peremptory decision were highly honourable to him. I have no doubt that he thought, having such an explanation to make as he has now made, and which I am persuaded the House will think perfectly and entirely satisfactory, that the explanation would come from him with a better grace and with more effect while holding an independent position, than if he made it from the bench on which we now sit. With regard to those insinuations and aspersions to which he has referred, I can only say that with him I repudiate them with disdain. I am firmly convinced, and I am sure all those who know my hon. friend must be equally convinced, that any charge of implication in these odious proceedings—which charge, I think, has been basely thrown out against him—is altogether unsupported by proof, and is utterly devoid of foundation." The vacancy in the admiralty created by this retirement was filled up by Mr. Childers.

The government was soon to lose the services of another and a far more important member of its administration. The subject of education became a prominent feature of the session. The public school commissioners had presented their report, and an interesting debate took place upon the novel blue book. The commissioners stated that having carefully examined the schools at Eton, Winchester, Westminster, St. Paul's, Merchant Taylor's, Shrewsbury, Harrow, and Rugby, they complained that

the course of study pursued at those institutions was lacking in breadth, and therefore failed to furnish that development of the mind which was really required. They also were of opinion, though they could not speak too highly of the discipline and moral training maintained at our public schools, that too much indulgence was exhibited to idleness. It was with regard to the exclusive character of the education pursued at these seats of learning that Mr. Cobden made his memorable remarks to his constituents at Rochdale. "I will take," he said in the last speech he ever delivered, "any undergraduate now at Oxford or Cambridge, and I will bring him to a map of the United States and ask him to put his finger on Chicago, and I will undertake to say he will not go within 1000 miles of it. Yet Chicago is a place of 150,000 inhabitants, from which 1,000,000 or 2,000,000 of people in our country are annually fed. These young gentlemen know all about the geography of ancient Greece and Egypt. Now I know I shall be pelted with Greek and Latin quotations for what I am going to say. When I was at Athens, I walked out one summer morning to seek the famous river, the Ilyssus, and after walking some hundred yards or so up what appeared to be the bed of the mountain torrent, I came upon a number of Athenian laundresses, and I found that they had dammed up this famous classical river, and were using every drop of its water for their lavatory purposes. Why then should not these young gentlemen, who know all about the geography of the Ilyssus, know also something about the geography of the Mississippi, the Ohio, and the Missouri?"\*

The education of the lower orders had also engaged the attention of the govern-

\* "To the Ilyssus we may confess that Cobden was a little unjust, but the point of his good humoured sarcasm has been much misrepresented. He was, he said in his last speech, a great advocate of culture of every kind. What he sought was that young men should be led to add to classical learning a great knowledge of modern affairs, and the habits of serious political thought about their own time."—*Life of Cobden*, by John Morley.

ment. The subject was intrusted to Mr. Lowe, who then held office as vice-president of the educational department. No one was better suited for the post. The university experiences of the vice-president his practical acquaintance with matters connected with education, his profound scholarship, which he pretended to despise—though somewhat after the fashion of the man proud of his lineage, who affects to scorn all advantages of birth—and his mastery of details, all marked him out as dedicated to the department to which he was appointed. Under the vigorous administration of Mr. Lowe the work of the office had been well done, and there was no reason to suppose that his connection with the department would soon be terminated. One of the great objects of his rule, which the vice-president had set before him, was to endeavour to place the various religious communions of the country on a footing of perfect equality, so far as the distribution of the grants made under the authority of the educational department was concerned. This latitudinarianism was strongly disapproved of by the Conservative party, whilst it was also made matter of complaint that Mr. Lowe, in the exercise of his official capacity, had taken upon himself to tamper with the reports of the inspectors of schools, and to suppress such statements as had been opposed to his own views. Lord Robert Cecil brought the matter before parliament, and moved—“That in the opinion of this House the mutilation of the reports of Her Majesty’s inspectors of schools, and the exclusion from them of statements and opinions adverse to the educational views entertained by the committee of council, while matters favourable to them are admitted, are violations of the understanding under which the appointment of inspectors was originally sanctioned by parliament, and tend entirely to destroy the value of their reports.” The House supported the views of Lord Robert, and the resolution was carried by a majority of eight.

The result of this division was regarded by Mr. Lowe as a censure so seriously reflecting upon his character as minister of the department, as to make it incompatible with his sense of honour any longer to retain office. At the same time it was felt that the vice-president had been thrown over; for had Lord Palmerston chosen to exert himself, it was scarcely probable that his colleague would have been visited with the censure of the House. Mr. Lowe, however, from some peculiarity of temperament, had never troubled himself about cultivating those arts and graces of manner which make heads of departments popular with their subordinates and acceptable to their colleagues. Furnished with a vast supply of spontaneous aversion, which was lavishly directed upon any person or in any quarter at the slightest provocation, holding in profound and patent scorn all who differed from his political opinions, endowed with a vocabulary more often steeped in the gall of sarcasm and invective than in the honey of compromise or approval, and gifted with a manner in which dictatorial clownishness and colonial brusqueness strove for the mastery, it perhaps was not a matter of great surprise that the ordinary exertions made by a minister to save a colleague from censure and overthrow were neglected on this occasion. As a matter of fact, however, Mr. Lowe was blameless in the case, for on a committee being appointed to investigate the charges brought against him, the inquiry resulted in the entire acquittal of the late vice-president, and in the motion of Lord Robert Cecil being rescinded.

Mr. Lowe complained at the time that the House had arrived at a decision suddenly, and in the absence of all evidence. He had, he said, neither marked nor mutilated the reports. All that he had ever done with the reports, when they were not framed in accordance with the official minute, was to return them to the inspectors, and leave them to discover for themselves in what respect their reports militated

against the rule laid down for their guidance by the department. Upon the fall of such an opponent Mr. Disraeli declined to remain perfectly silent, and in a spirit of graceful chivalry he delivered (April 18, 1864) a few complimentary words. "When an appeal," he said, "has been made to the opinion of the House by a right hon. gentleman on a matter affecting his personal honour, I do not see how hon. members on this side can be silent. At least I wish to express my own opinion, and I have risen to say for myself and for those around me, that we take the statement of the right hon. gentleman, as far as his personal honour is concerned, as perfectly satisfactory, and we estimate that honour, after his explanation to-night, as inviolate. . . . I have always opposed the right hon. gentleman as to the principles on which his policy, with regard to education, has been carried on; but I have always borne, and I now bear, my testimony to his distinguished talent, the clearness of his intellect, and the vigour with which he has conducted the public business; and I only regret that so much talent has been lost to the public service, chiefly, as it appears to me, from the right hon. gentleman in this, as in many other instances, not having been properly supported by his colleagues." Mr. Lowe fell, as many another unpopular man has fallen, not because of the faults he committed, but owing to the strong personal animosity he had it in his nature to excite.

Upon the two proposals for reform which were introduced this session, Mr. Disraeli did not speak. Mr. Locke King brought forward his usual county franchise bill, which was as usual rejected. Lord Palmerston spoke strongly against it in words which might have issued from the lips of the most bigoted Conservative. "I hardly think," he said, "it was expedient for my hon. friend to bring forward his bill at the present juncture, for it is plain that there does not now exist the

same anxiety for organic change which was observable some time ago. The fact is, that organic changes were introduced more as a means than as an end, the end being great improvement in the whole of our commercial legislation. All such changes as were desirable have long since been effected, as the result of our organic reforms, and therefore there is so much less desire for further innovations. There are also considerations connected with external affairs, tending to abate our anxieties for organic changes. The events which are taking place in other countries, and which are in a great measure the result of their constitutional systems, have made the people of this country much less anxious for change."

This plain speaking on the part of the prime minister was shortly afterwards counteracted by certain remarks which fell from Mr. Gladstone, who spoke in favour of a wide extension of the franchise, upon the bill introduced by Mr. Baines for lowering the franchise in the boroughs. With evident reference to the argument of Lord Palmerston, that since the people did not agitate for innovations reform was unnecessary, the chancellor of the exchequer exclaimed—"We are told that the working classes do not agitate; but is it desirable that we should wait till they do agitate? In my opinion, agitation by the working classes upon any political subject whatever is a thing not to be waited for, not to be made a condition previous to any parliamentary movement, but, on the contrary, to be deprecated, and, if possible, prevented by wise and provident measures. An agitation by the working classes is not like an agitation by the classes above them, having leisure. The agitation of the classes having leisure is easily conducted. Every hour of their time has not a money value; their wives and children are not dependent on the application of those hours to labour. But when a working man finds himself in such a condition that he must abandon that daily labour on which he is strictly depen-

dent for his daily bread, it is only because then, in railway language, the danger-signal is turned on, and because he feels a strong necessity for action, and a distrust in the rulers who have driven him to that necessity. The present state of things, I rejoice to say, does not indicate that distrust; but if we admit that, we must not allege the absence of agitation on the part of the working classes as a reason why the parliament of England and the public mind of England should be indisposed to entertain the discussion of this question." In spite, however, of this advocacy, the bill was defeated by a majority of fifty-six. After this expression of opinion, Mr. Gladstone was henceforth looked upon by the more decided Liberals as their champion, and as one to whom the fate of a future reform bill would be intrusted.

The budget was brought forward (April 4, 1864), and the chancellor of the exchequer had the satisfaction to announce to a very cordial House that, in spite of all adverse prognostications, he had a surplus in hand. Our gross exports and imports had mounted up to £444,000,000, being nearly three times as much as they had been in the year 1842, the date of the financial reforms introduced by Sir Robert Peel. The revenue was estimated at £69,460,000, the expenditure at £66,890,000, thus placing at the disposal of the chancellor of the exchequer a balance of £2,570,000. With this surplus Mr. Gladstone proposed to take off a penny in the pound from the income tax, to reduce the fire-insurance duty from three shillings to one shilling and sixpence so far as stock in trade was concerned, to make sundry reductions in the sugar duties, and, in short, to grant a relief from taxation to the extent of some £3,000,000. The budget was received with general satisfaction, and led to little discussion. The chief point raised was as to the advisability of reducing the malt tax. An important section of the agricultural interest was in favour of reducing the malt tax in preference to the sugar duties. Accordingly, when the sugar

duties were about to be considered, Colonel Barttelot moved "that the consideration of these duties be postponed until the House had had the opportunity of considering the expediency of the reduction of the duty upon malt." A brief debate ensued, during which the malt tax and the sugar duties were placed in antagonism; but on a division, the motion of Colonel Barttelot was rejected by a large majority.

This rejection was caused by the course Mr. Disraeli pursued, who on that occasion (April 14, 1864) supported the proposal of the government. He explained the reasons which had induced him to vote with the ministry. He was, he said, as much alive as most people were to the objections to the malt tax, and he was not surprised at the motion receiving the support of several of his friends. They had now for some time been lessening the prices of articles of drink to the wealthier classes, and he thought it was a natural conclusion, and one of a very grave character, that they should inquire whether it was not in their power to lighten the pressure which the price of beer imposed upon the limited resources of the humbler classes. Still he had always been of opinion that it was inexpedient to deal with the malt tax in any other fashion than in a large manner—in a manner which at least would insure some considerable alleviation of the public burdens; but as no such proposal was before them, he could not support the motion. A remission of one-fourth of the malt tax, as had been suggested—a remission, by the way, which would scarcely be of any avail—would compel the government to lay their hands not merely upon that portion of the surplus which was to be applied to the relief of the sugar duties, but also upon that portion which was consecrated to the remission of the income tax. The chief cause, however, which induced him to oppose the motion was his wish that the government should keep faith with the country. They were now at peace, and the war duties imposed

at the outbreak of the Crimean war ought therefore to be repealed.

"I have always felt," he said, "the political importance of terminating as soon as possible the war taxes, all the taxes specially connected with the Crimean struggle. If any great struggle were again to present itself, and an appeal to the people became necessary for a vast increase of direct taxation, and heavy imports upon the three great articles (malt, tea, and sugar) of public consumption, with what face could you appeal to them and expect the support of a high-spirited and patriotic nation, if they could turn round and say, 'In 1855, when the sovereign was engaged in a dangerous war, you came to us with a financial programme and induced us, by certain representations, to increase the direct and indirect taxes; but you have not complied with those terms, and you cannot expect us without a murmur to bear burdens which otherwise we would endeavour to bear.' It is said that the chancellor of the exchequer departed from the short line of that policy when he proposed the repeal of the paper duty. I am not answerable for the chancellor of the exchequer. I never spoke upon this subject without urging upon the House the necessity of relieving the country as soon as possible from these war taxes, not upon financial grounds, but from high political considerations; and when the chancellor of the exchequer brought forward his motion upon the paper duty, it was with the sanction and assistance of myself and others that a motion was made which proposed that we should remit the war duty upon tea instead of repealing the duty upon paper; and I would at that time have also proposed the remission of the war duty upon sugar, if circumstances had justified it. But the natural corollary to that proceeding, sanctioned, as I understand, by every gentleman who sits around me, was that as soon as possible, by getting rid of the war duty on sugar, we should terminate all those

increased burdens which the Russian war had placed upon us. This is the position in which we are placed, and therefore it is not for me to enter into a discussion of the merits or demerits of a duty on malt. I think I have given, in the course of my life, tolerable proof of my sincerity upon that subject. We staked our existence as a government upon carrying a measure which would have remitted one-half of the duty upon malt. That is not now the question. It is whether the House is not pledged, or feels itself pledged—I am myself pledged—by frequent votes, by more than financial considerations, by considerations of high policy, that it is our first duty to fulfil our engagements with the tax-paying people of the country, and to show that we are mindful of the engagements which, by the queen's ministers, we entered into in 1855; with the conviction that if we act with fairness and justice to them, if we appeal to them on a future occasion, on an equal struggle and in an equal emergency, we shall be responded to in a spirit as firm and as patriotic." A few weeks later on in the session Mr. Gladstone consented to remit the duty on malt used for the consumption of cattle.

A curious piece of ministerial negligence, which amounted to an evasion of parliamentary law, was at this time discovered by Mr. Disraeli, and led to some interesting observations. It appeared that five under-secretaries of state occupied seats in the House of Commons, whereas, according to law, only four could claim that privilege. The history of the legislation upon this subject was carefully explained by Mr. Disraeli (April 18, 1864). The tenure of office, so far as the House of Commons was concerned, he said, was regulated by the famous Act of Queen Anne. About the year 1708 there was a strong parliamentary opinion, if not a strong public opinion, that there were sufficient placemen in the House of Commons, and a resolution was passed that the number should not be increased. An Act accordingly became law, which declared

that henceforth any one who accepted an office of profit in the service of the crown, created after the year 1705, should thereby become incapable of election as a member of the House of Commons; heavy penalties were also attached to the violation of this statute. Seventy years passed on before any further legislation upon the subject took place.\* Great events, great disasters had occurred during that long interval. We had lost our American colonies; the country was in a state of distress and despondency; and there arose, "as always in England under such circumstances," a cry for administrative and economical reform. Mr. Burke was then a minister of state, and it fell to his lot to consider by what means the administration might be improved and economy effected. Accordingly, in 1782, he brought forward his bill for economical reform, which, among other reductions, abolished the third secretary of state, who was the secretary of state for the colonies. The result of this bill was that two secretaries of state were permitted to sit in the House of Commons, and two under-secretaries.

Such, so far as the distribution of offices with reference to the House of Commons was concerned, was the state of affairs which prevailed for another seventy years, including the whole of the great revolutionary war. During that period new secretaries of state were created, who, of course, appointed under-secretaries; but they were appointed solely by the prerogative of the crown, not by statute, and none of them ever sat in the House of Commons. All offices created before 1705 were "old," all created subsequently were "new," or offices subject to the provisions of the statute of Anne. Thus, until the outbreak of the Crimean war, the invariable practice of parliament had been that only two secretaries of state and two under-secretaries could sit in the House

of Commons. In 1855 a third secretary of state, who was to be secretary of state for the department of war, was created, together with an under-secretary; and in the bill sanctioning the appointment, it was expressly stipulated that three under-secretaries of state might sit in the House of Commons, but "no more." Upon the expiration of the East India Company's charter, and upon the transfer of the vast possessions of India to the crown, a fourth secretary of state was appointed—the secretary of state for India—with the power of creating an under-secretary of state in place of the two joint-secretaries of the board of control that previously existed. It was also then distinctly laid down that four secretaries of state and four under-secretaries, but "no more," might have seats in the popular chamber.

Upon the distribution of offices in the two Houses, Mr. Disraeli thus expressed himself:—

"I would not myself lay down any inflexible rules, such as the laws of the Medes and Persians, with respect to the distribution, on the formation of a ministry, of the offices of state between the two Houses of parliament. On the whole, that must be left to the discretion of the person who undertakes the responsibility of forming an administration. But there are considerations which I think, generally speaking, ought to guide the individual called on by the sovereign to form a government, in regard to the distribution of offices. For example, I would venture to say that I think the heads of the two great departments of public expenditure should find seats in the House of Commons. I do not think the due control of this House over the public expenditure can be sufficiently possessed under other circumstances; and if the control of the House is diminished in that respect, its authority in the estimation of the country will proportionately suffer. With respect to the secretaries of state, I would say that the majority of them should have seats in the House of Commons—even

\* Mr. Disraeli forgot the Act of 1742 for the purpose of further limiting and reducing the number of officers capable of sitting in the House of Commons.

a large majority of them, I would say, as was the case with the late government. The House upon reflection will see that in this matter the constitution has, in practice, adequately provided for the representation of the ministry in the other House of parliament. One secretary of state must have a seat in the House of Lords—at least, he cannot sit here; and therefore, he must find a seat in the House of Lords. The lord chancellor, one of the most eminent members of the cabinet, and the head of the jurisprudence of the country, must have a seat in the other House; the lord-president of the council must also be a peer, as must also be the lord privy-seal. The postmaster-general is by statute prohibited \* from sitting in the House of Commons; and since the Reform Act—a measure which it was supposed would so greatly increase the influence and power of the popular branch of the legislature—the prime minister, in the majority of cases, has found a seat in the House of Lords. Added to this, the chief offices of the household, always held by peers, have sometimes been held by eminent statesmen—as by Lord Wellesley, for instance. I think no one can deny, therefore, that the constitution has provided adequately for the representation of the government in the House of Lords.”†

Mr. Disraeli then complained that in the present government the heads of departments were chiefly in the Upper House, and that ministers were represented in the House of Commons by under-secretaries, who were not treated by their chiefs with any extraordinary signs of respect. On

\* It is only since 1881, when the office of postmaster-general of Great Britain and of Ireland was consolidated, that the appointment of postmaster-general has been considered a political office. Until the accession of George IV. it was held by two joint-commissioners, who were expressly disqualified from sitting in the House of Commons, on account of the office having been created in 1711, subsequent to the statute of Queen Anne, above quoted. In 1866 an Act was passed rendering the postmaster-general eligible for the House of Commons. When the postmaster-general is a member of the House of Lords, it is the duty of the secretary of the treasury to represent the department in the Lower House.

† In the first cabinet of George III. only one of its members was in the House of Commons, and thirteen in the Lords. In 1788 Mr. Pitt was the sole cabinet minister in the Commons. In 1801 four cabinet ministers were in

Lord Palmerston taking office, it had been said by an eminent Liberal (Lord Hartington) that “the government in this country ought to be conducted by the educated section of the Liberal party”—a phrase “more candid than felicitous,” which now signified “that the great offices of state in the new ministry were to be confided to the custody of half a dozen peers of the realm.” If he took only a party view of the arrangement, remarked Mr. Disraeli, he would be perfectly satisfied, since “nothing could tend more to the political degradation of the party opposite.” But there was something dearer than party triumph, and that was the character of the House of Commons; and, in his opinion, the present distribution of offices was calculated to diminish the authority and lower the character of the House of Commons. “I am sure,” he said, “that every honourable gentleman in this House feels really sorry when anything takes place that humiliates the character of this House, or places it in a position not calculated to preserve for it the confidence and support of the country. For my own part, believing that parliamentary government is practically impossible without two organized parties—that without them it would be the most contemptible and corrupt rule which could be devised—I always regret anything that may damage the just influence of either of the great parties in the state.” But, continued Mr. Disraeli, not only had the government, in their distribution of offices, chosen to ignore the House of Commons—not only was the government represented by under-

the Commons and four in the Lords. In 1804 Mr. Pitt and Lord Castlereagh were, out of a cabinet of twelve, the only ministers in the Commons. In the Grenville ministry (“All the Talents”), of a cabinet of eleven, seven were in the Lords and four in the Commons. In 1809, of Mr. Perceval’s cabinet, six were peers and four were commoners. In 1812, in Lord Liverpool’s cabinet, ten were peers and only two commoners. In 1814 the commoners were increased to four, and the peers decreased to nine. In 1818, out of a cabinet of fourteen, six were commoners; and in 1822, out of a cabinet of fifteen, nine were peers. Since the reform bill of 1832 the leading members of the government have been more equally apportioned between the two Houses; and, as a general rule, the principles laid down by Mr. Disraeli on this occasion have been followed, more or less, in the distribution of offices.



secretaries—"gentlemen whose abilities we all recognize, who are frequently adequate to the offices they nominally hold, but who are obliged to encounter us upon questions which no one can properly treat who is not in the counsels of his sovereign, who is ignorant of the motives and the policy really pursued by the cabinet, and who cannot enter into those engagements and make those representations which the authority of ministers of the crown alone authorizes them to express"—not only was the government represented by under-secretaries of state, but, instead of the legitimate number of four, there were then five who had seats in the House. It was the duty of the House to see that its composition was complete and correct. It was most important that no one should vote in the House who was not entitled. Mr. Disraeli, therefore, concluded by moving, that as the law had been violated, the seat of the fifth under-secretary of state had been and was thereby vacated.

Lord Palmerston admitted that the government had, by an oversight, done that which the law did not authorize them; still the House must share the blame, for it was the duty of an Opposition to watch with a keen eye the conduct of the government, and to pick them up even before they fell. At the instigation of Sir George Grey, a select committee was appointed to inquire whether the under-secretary last appointed had thereby vacated his seat. The conclusion which the committee arrived at was, that the effect of the irregularity which had taken place was not to vacate the seat of any of the under-secretaries. A bill of indemnity was, however, brought in to release the under-secretaries from any possible penal consequences from the violation of the law. In the meantime the illegality complained of by Mr. Disraeli had ceased, owing to the acceptance, by an under-secretary of the home department, of the vice-presidency of the council of education, which thus reduced the number of under-secretaries to the constitutional limit.

All domestic questions, however, were lost in the interest with which the Dano-German struggle was followed. The progress of the Germans was loudly denounced, and the resistance of the Danes created throughout England the deepest sympathy. Towards the end of April a conference was held in London, though without an armistice, between the representatives of the powers concerned, to see if some amicable arrangement could not be arrived at. A few days before the meeting of the plenipotentiaries, Mr. Bernal Osborne moved "that it was unjust and inexpedient to insist on the provisions of the treaty of London of 1852, so far as they related to the order of succession in the duchies of Schleswig and Holstein, as a basis for the settlement of the Dano-German dispute." He blamed the foreign policy of the government with reference to the Schleswig-Holstein question, for having led Denmark to believe that if she resisted the demands of the German powers she would receive material assistance from England. He admitted that the sympathy of the country was naturally enlisted on the side of the Danes, who were gallantly fighting against terrible odds; yet it could not be denied that in the past Denmark had availed herself of her weakness to evade systematically her most solemn engagements, whilst her treatment of the duchies had been marked by the most arbitrary and tyrannical conduct.

Mr. Disraeli moved (April 19, 1864) the "previous question." It had been remarked, he said, that to propose the previous question in a discussion of this character implied a certain degree of confidence in the foreign policy of the government; therefore, not to gain any votes under false pretences, he begged at once to say that he had no confidence whatever in the foreign policy of the government. He thought the foreign policy of the government, especially during the last twelve months, was calculated to occasion very just and grave anxiety throughout the country. He objected to the course pursued by ministers towards

Poland; he objected to the manner in which France had been lured on with regard to the Polish question, and had then been deserted; and he strongly disapproved of the manner in which our refusal to attend the congress had been given. Why then, it was asked, did he not move a vote of want of confidence? He answered that he declined to do so because the necessary parliamentary papers, for him to arrive at a proper conclusion upon the subject, had not yet been laid before the House; and because by such a motion he would interfere with the negotiations that were about to be entered into. He would take his own time for such a step. He declined to fight the battle on the ground or at the time selected by his opponents. At the first fitting opportunity he would ask the House to pronounce its judgment on the foreign policy of the government; but he was the best judge of when such an opportunity should arrive.

"It is the fashion now," said Mr. Disraeli, "to taunt the Opposition on the ground that they have no policy, but it would be a new function for us if we had one. We are the constitutional critics of public affairs; but the originators of measures and inventors of a policy, the individuals who come forward with their schemes and suggestions for public approbation, are not the Opposition, but the ministers of the crown; and we stand here to criticise the suggestions and schemes which they bring forward, and which are founded on knowledge which we cannot share, and inspired no doubt by the feeling of responsibility under which they act." "My opinion," he concluded, "as far as I can form one, on the conduct of the government with respect to their management of Danish affairs, is such as I have always expressed, and I have seen nothing to change it. . . . As for the question, 'Are you for war or not?' I deny that that is the whole issue. I am not for war. I can contemplate with difficulty

the combination of circumstances which can justify war in the present age, unless the honour of the country is likely to suffer; but I can understand that things have been so mismanaged by Her Majesty's government as to be brought into a position which, had they been managed with firmness and at the same time with conciliation, they never would have occupied; and this system of government—of always supposing that the Gordian knot can only be cut—is one which will some day drift us again into war, as it drifted us into the Crimean war."

At the conclusion of the debate Mr. Osborne offered to withdraw his resolution, but to this the House would not consent. Mr. Disraeli then moved the "previous question," which was unanimously agreed to.

The conference had met, and hostilities had been suspended; but after deliberations, which were carried on with great secrecy during several weeks, the plenipotentiaries dispersed, not having been able to arrive at any satisfactory conclusion. Lord Russell had submitted, among other resolutions, the following to the conference:—"In order to prevent a future contest and to satisfy Germany, it would be necessary, in our opinion, entirely to separate Holstein, Lauenburg, and the southern part of Schleswig from the Danish monarchy. To justify so vast a sacrifice on the part of Denmark, and to maintain the independence of the Danish monarchy, it is desirable, in our opinion, that the line of the frontier should not be drawn more to the north than the mouth of the Schlei and the line of the Dannewerke." Denmark consented in principle to this proposal, but insisted that she should only be asked to cede Lauenburg on certain conditions. Austria and Prussia declined to accede to the proposed boundary line, and adhered to the one first traced by themselves from Apenrade to Tondern. Secret as these deliberations had been conducted, enough had transpired to alarm the Opposition. The government had declared that

the only principle on which they could go into the conference was that of maintaining the integrity of Denmark. But now ugly rumours were circulated—hinted at in newspapers and discussed at clubs—that the government, under pretence of serving and defending Denmark, were in reality betraying her. England, it was said, had pushed Denmark from concession to concession; first she had forced her to retire from Holstein, then to abandon Rendsburg, then to consent to an armistice, then to abandon Schleswig south of the Schlei; and now it was stated that Lord Palmerston intended to yield to the demand of the Germans, and hand over a Danish population to German rule. Were these stories true? Were ministers loyal to their policy as to the integrity of Denmark? It was all very well to say that the House of Commons should not interfere whilst negotiations were proceeding; but how if the government were betraying the trust reposed in them? Was all discussion to be stifled upon this principle, and the country to be hoodwinked?

Mr. Disraeli brought the matter (June 6, 1864) before parliament. He knew nothing, he remarked, in their parliamentary system which was more to be admired than the reserve which was maintained in parliament when it was known that the government were engaged on important negotiations, upon which the question of peace or war might turn. He thought it a characteristic of their system, which marked it out from all other attempts at parliamentary government, and was one of the surest guarantees for the endurance of constitutional rule. Still they must remember that parliamentary reserve under those circumstances depended upon one constitutional condition, and when that was observed the parliamentary reserve was perfectly intelligible and constitutional. The condition of the reserve of parliament, when a government was engaged in negotiations, was that parliament should be acquainted with the principles upon which the nego-

tiations were conducted and approved of by the general policy of the government. That was the condition which had always been acknowledged, and on which the salutary system of parliamentary reserve under those circumstances was founded. Was that condition now being fulfilled? Were they convinced that the policy, so frankly announced by the government as to the maintenance of the integrity of Denmark, was being pursued? He did not ask for any details, he did not expect any minute communications; but it would be satisfactory, both for the House and the country, to know that the policy which the government had announced was being carried out at the meetings of the conference. Reports to the contrary had been circulated, and if true, they should be openly avowed; if false, they should be as boldly denied. It was neither the duty of the House nor the government to keep silence under such circumstances. The House of Commons had supported the prime minister because he had frankly declared that the government had entered the conference for a definite object, and with a definite view—to maintain the integrity and independence of Denmark.

"We do not want," exclaimed Mr. Disraeli, "to hold the noble lord pedantically to the fulfilment of any particular detail which he may have announced at such a moment; all we want is that the spirit of his policy shall be observed and maintained. It was because we credited the noble lord with this assurance that we were silent. A suspension of arms took place for a month; and that I held to be an incident of great importance, having ventured to remind the House that a conference without an armistice or a suspension of hostilities is generally fruitless and unsatisfactory. The month has now expired, or is about to expire; and were there no rumours or suppositions, no causes to justify men in thinking that that is happening which is not for the honour or interests of England; were there no causes

existing to make the House suppose that the policy of Her Majesty's government has in any way changed; were everything as smooth as a summer sea, and were there no grounds for anxiety and dark mistrust in the public mind—it would still, I maintain, have been the office and the duty of the minister, on an occasion such as the expiration of an armistice, to come forward and give some account to parliament of the progress of these negotiations. He at least ought to have re-assured the public mind, and given them some confidence in the conduct of these discussions, and have reiterated the spirit of that policy which parliament had sanctioned, if not by a formal vote, at least by its silence. The House will see that the noble lord ought to be called to account, even if there were no cause for anxiety. But if what I have ventured to call a wild hypothesis be true, if it be the fact that Her Majesty's government in this interval have entirely changed their policy, if they themselves are participating in the partition of Denmark, which only five months ago they were stirring up an European war to prevent, then I say it is a mockery of the House of Commons if, under such circumstances, the noble lord remains silent." Lord Palmerston, however, declined to make any disclosures. He was, he said, tongue-tied, and must wait till the time had arrived for revelations.

The House had not to remain long in suspense. The conference broke up towards the end of July, the belligerent powers being unable, as we have said, to agree upon a boundary-line satisfactory to each, and hostilities were resumed the next day. The prime minister laid the whole matter before the House of Commons. He sketched the history of the dispute, the progress of the quarrel between Denmark and Germany, and the proceedings that had taken place at the conference from its commencement to its collapse. "We laboured," said Lord Palmerston (June 27, 1864), "by every possible means, in conjunction with the other neutral

powers, to bring the parties to an agreement; and we felt it as a calamity, as everybody must, that war should begin again for a matter which might so easily, we think, be adjusted, and for a question not involving the existence of a nation or of a government, but simply relating to a comparatively small district of territory. That having unfortunately happened, it became the duty of Her Majesty's government to consider the course which it behoved them to adopt. We felt great sympathy for Denmark. We felt that although she had in the beginning been in the wrong, another sovereign had succeeded to the throne, that a different ministry had the direction of her affairs, and that there had been manifested by acts a strong desire to set that right which had been wrong. We felt that from the beginning to the end of these last events she had been ill-used, and that might had over-ridden right. We knew, also, that the sympathies of almost the whole British nation were in favour of Denmark. We should, therefore, have been glad to have found it possible to recommend our sovereign to take part with Denmark in the approaching struggle. But, on the other hand, it was to be considered that whatever wrongs Denmark had sustained, and they were many, she had in the origin been in the wrong herself; that she had in the end, and at the very last conference, rejected a proposal reasonable in itself, which, if it had been accepted by the two parties, would necessarily have led to a peaceful solution of the question in dispute. Her fault in that, no doubt, is equally shared by her antagonists; but still, in considering the position which England ought to adopt, that matter could not be left out of sight. Well then, it was to be considered what really was the matter in dispute for which hostilities were to begin, and it did not appear that that matter was one of very great importance; it did not affect the independence of Denmark, and it went very little beyond what she herself had agreed to. It consisted simply in the

question to whom a portion of territory should belong. On the other hand, as men who were considering what advice in a very important European question, for I do not disguise its importance, should be given to their sovereign and recommended to parliament, we could not lose sight of the magnitude of the object, the magnitude of the resistance which would have to be overcome, and the comparative means which England and her supposed antagonists would have to bring to bear upon the contest.

"It had been ascertained early in these transactions that France, for reasons of which she was entitled to be the judge, had declined to take any active measures in support of Denmark [France had not forgotten or forgiven the refusal of England to attend her proposed congress at Paris], and we knew that that disposition still continued unchanged. We had ascertained that Russia, for reasons for which she also was entitled to be the judge, was not inclined to take any active measures in support of Denmark. The whole brunt, therefore, of the effort to dislodge the German troops, and those who might come to their assistance from Schleswig and Holstein, would fall upon this country alone. Well, we have not thought it consistent with our duty to give our sovereign advice to undertake such an enterprise. We know the honourable sympathy which the people of this country feel for the unhappy condition of Denmark; but at the same time, we do not feel it to be consistent with our duty to recommend to parliament and the country to make this great exertion, and to undergo the great sacrifices which must be the consequence of entering into such a conflict with the whole of Germany. I assume that in the present state of things, upon which our decision is made, the real contest lies between Germany and Denmark with regard to—I am afraid I can hardly say—that part of Schleswig in dispute, because it is impossible to say that the dispute may not apply to the whole of

Schleswig. It would be more honourable, on the part of Germany, to be content with that which they demanded; but we know that strength and success frequently carry men beyond that line which, on cooler reflection, they might have been disposed to insist upon. Still the conflict is as regards Schleswig, and not as regards the independence of Denmark, or the capital of the Danish monarchy. I do not mean to—and I think it right to put in that reservation—I do not mean to say that if the war should assume a different character, if the existence of Denmark as an independent power in Europe should be at stake, if we had reason to expect we should see at Copenhagen the horrors of a town taken by assault, the destruction of property, the sacrifice of the lives not only of its defenders but of its peaceful inhabitants, the confiscation which would arise, the capture of the sovereign as a prisoner of war, or events of that kind—I do not mean to say that if any of these events were likely to happen, the position of this country might not possibly be a fit subject for re-consideration, or that other counsel might not properly be taken. But this I say on the part of Her Majesty's government, that if any change of policy were thought desirable, such a change would be communicated to parliament, if parliament were sitting; and if parliament were not sitting, the earliest opportunity would be taken of asking its judgment."

To Lord Palmerston succeeded Mr. Disraeli. He had no intention, said the leader of the Opposition, on this occasion, to enter into a general discussion respecting the transactions that had taken place between Denmark and Germany, and the policy of the English government with regard to them. That he would refer to a future time. He rose merely to remind the House of the exact position which it now occupied. As far as the negotiations of the government with respect to the dispute between Denmark and Germany were concerned, the House had incurred no respon-

sibility whatever. It had given no opinion upon the subject. It had expressed no approbation whatever of the conduct of the government. It had respected the prerogatives of the crown and the functions of constituted ministers, and had therefore pursued a wise, a temperate, and a patriotic course. But the time had now arrived, continued Mr. Disraeli, when some opinion ought to be pronounced by the House, and he intended to take the earliest opportunity to ascertain that opinion. The conference had met without hope, and it rose without hope; it met without a basis, and therefore it had led to no result. He had heard with astonishment, from the statement of the prime minister, that the islands of Denmark were only necessary to the independence of that country. Then, why had the government been committed to a policy which had so long and so pertinaciously declared, that the possession of Schleswig and Holstein by the crown of Denmark was necessary to the balance of power and to the maintenance of the public law of Europe?

The truth was that the whole foreign policy of the government had been one series of miserable blunders; it had been based on senseless and spiritless menaces, which had impaired the just influence of England in the councils of Europe, and by impairing that influence, had diminished the most effectual means of maintaining peace. Judging from the past, sarcastically observed Mr. Disraeli, he would prefer that the affairs of the country should be conducted on the principle of Messrs. Bright and Cobden, rather than on the policy avowed by the government of Lord Palmerston. "I think that, in that case," he said, "as the consequences would almost be the same, our position would be more consistent; it would certainly be more profitable, and in my opinion it would really be more dignified. At least those honourable gentlemen would threaten nobody; at least they would not tell Denmark that if she is attacked she will not

find herself alone; at least they would not exasperate Germany by declaiming in the full parliament of England against the 'aggravated outrages' of her policy; at least they would not lure on Denmark by delusive counsels and fallacious hopes. I declare that, in my opinion, the position of England would be more dignified if the policy which those honourable members profess regulated our affairs, rather than the policy by which the noble lord seeks to guide us." He concluded by stating, amid ringing cheers, that he would venture to ask the opinion of the House of Commons on the policy of the government, and he would take care that no unnecessary delay occurred before he availed himself of that privilege.

His promise was soon fulfilled. It was felt by many that the government, by their policy of empty brag, richly deserved parliamentary censure, and the motion of Mr. Disraeli was eagerly looked for. Early in July resolutions, which amounted to a distinct vote of censure, were moved in the Upper House by Lord Malmesbury, and in the Lower House by Mr. Disraeli. Owing to the absence of Lord Derby, the debate in the House of Lords was robbed of much of the brilliancy that it would otherwise have possessed; and consequently it was in the discussion in the House of Commons that public interest was chiefly centred. In the presence of one of those intensely crowded Houses which seasons of great excitement never fail to assemble, Mr. Disraeli rose (July 4, 1864) to move—"That an humble address be presented to Her Majesty to thank Her Majesty for having directed the correspondence on Denmark and Germany, and the protocol of the conference recently held in London, to be laid before parliament; to assure Her Majesty that we have heard with deep concern that the sittings of the conference have been brought to a close without accomplishing the important purpose for which it was convened; and to express to Her Majesty our great regret that, while the course pursued by Her Majesty's government has

failed to maintain their avowed policy of upholding the integrity and independence of Denmark, it has lowered the just influence of this country in the capitals of Europe, and thereby diminished the securities for peace."

He thus began:—"Some of the longest and most disastrous wars of modern Europe have been wars of succession. The Thirty Years' War was a war of succession. It arose from a dispute respecting the inheritance of a duchy in the north of Europe, not very distant from that duchy of Holstein which now engages general attention. There are two causes why wars originating in a disputed succession become usually of a prolonged and obstinate character. The first is internal ambition, and the second foreign ambition. Sometimes a domestic party, under such circumstances, has an understanding with a foreign potentate; and again, the ambition of that foreign potentate excites the distrust, perhaps the envy of other powers; and the consequence is, generally speaking, that the dissensions thus created lead to prolonged and complicated struggles. I apprehend—indeed, I entertain no doubt—that it was in the contemplation of such circumstances possibly occurring in our time, that the statesmen of Europe some thirteen years ago—knowing that it was probable that the royal line of Denmark would cease, and that upon the death of the then king his dominions would be divided and in all probability disputed—gave their best consideration to obviate the recurrence of such calamities to Europe."

Mr. Disraeli then sketched the history of the treaty of London of 1852, and showed that under that treaty England had incurred no legal responsibility which was not equally entered into by France and Russia. He touched upon the dispute between the German Diet and the King of Denmark, and was of opinion—since the controversy was strictly federal, and not international—that the interference of England in the matter was uncalled for.

The other powers of Europe, who were equally interested and equally bound to interfere, did not interpose as the English government had. England had declared that, whatever was the issue of the quarrel between Denmark and Germany, she would not permit the integrity or independence of Denmark to suffer. "We are asked," Lord Palmerston had said, "what is the policy of Her Majesty's government respecting that dispute. We concur with all reasonable men in Europe, including those in France or Russia, in desiring that the independence, the integrity, and the rights of Denmark may be maintained. We are convinced—I am, at least—that if any violent attempt were made to overthrow those rights and interfere with that independence, those who made the attempt would find in the result that it would not be Denmark alone with which they would have to contend." That, commented the leader of the Opposition, was a statesman-like declaration of policy, which produced no little effect on the Continent. Yet what came of it? France had, at the commencement of the dispute, expressed herself as desirous of acting in concert with this government in the matter; but England had offended France by withdrawing her co-operation in the Polish question and by refusing to attend the proposed congress at Paris; consequently the Emperor of the French, when called upon, had declined to take any active part in protecting Denmark from her German foe. France resolved to be strictly neutral. General Fleury had said to Lord Wodehouse at Copenhagen, "that his own instructions from the emperor were not to take part in any negotiations here, but to tell the Danish government explicitly that if Denmark became involved in a war with Germany, France would not come to her assistance."

Such a course was perfectly straightforward and intelligible, and if England had adopted it no objection would have been raised. "We were not bound," said Mr. Disraeli, "by the treaty of 1852 to go

to the assistance of Denmark if she became involved in a war with Germany. No one pretends that we were. As a matter of high policy, much as we may regret any disturbance in the territorial limits of Europe, being a country the policy of which is a policy of tranquillity and peace, there were no adequate considerations which could have justified England in entering into an extensive European war, without allies, to prevent a war between Germany and Denmark. That was, I say, an honourable and intelligible course." However, continued the leader of the Opposition, instead of adopting such a policy, the government invented a process of conduct which was without example in the history of the country; it consisted of menaces never accomplished, and promises never fulfilled. They declared to Denmark that the treaty of 1852 should be maintained, and they sent despatches to Germany threatening that "if the overthrow of the dynasty now reigning in Denmark is sought by Germany, the most serious consequences may ensue." What followed these warlike utterances? They were calmly ignored by Germany, and the Federal execution took place. Panic-stricken, the government again appealed to France, and was again repulsed. Then came the invasion of Schleswig. Once more France was appealed to, and once more the appeal was in vain. "The emperor," replied the French foreign minister—and his words since recent events have a curious interest—"the emperor would feel repugnance to any course which should bind him to oppose in arms the wishes of Germany. It may be comparatively easy for England to carry on a war which can never go beyond maritime operations of blockade and capture of ships. Schleswig and England are far apart from each other. But the soil of Germany touches the soil of France, and a war between France and Germany would be one of the most burdensome, and one of the most hazardous, in which the French empire could engage. Besides these con-

siderations, the emperor cannot fail to recollect that he has been made an object of mistrust and suspicion in Europe on account of his supposed projects of aggrandizement on the Rhine. A war commenced on the frontiers of Germany could not fail to give strength to these unfounded and unwarrantable imputations. For these reasons the government of the emperor will not take at present any engagement on the subject of Denmark. If hereafter the balance of power should be seriously threatened, the emperor may be inclined to take new measures in the interest of France or of Europe. But for the present the emperor reserves to his government entire liberty."

Still, in spite of this snub from Paris, the government continued its interference and the issue of its meaningless menaces. It interfered in the internal affairs of Denmark, it railed at Prussia, and waxed wroth at Austria. Yet no assistance was given, no active measures supported our threats. Denmark was left to fight out matters for herself, and the German forces proceeded with their hostile aims. Europe laughed at us; we would interfere, we would write despatches, we would be brave or firm on paper, but we would not fight. Then came the London conference. "The conference lasted six weeks," said Mr. Disraeli. "It wasted six weeks. It lasted as long as a carnival, and, like a carnival, it was an affair of masks and mystification. Our ministers went to it as men in distressed circumstances go to a place of amusement—to while away the time with a consciousness of impending failure. However, the summary of the conference is this—that Her Majesty's government made two considerable proposals. They proposed, first, the dismemberment of Denmark. So much for its integrity. They proposed, in the second place, that the remainder of Denmark should be placed under the guarantee of the great powers. They would have created another Turkey in Europe, or the same geographical relation, the scene of the



same rival intrigues, and the same fertile source of constant misconceptions and wars. So much for the independence of Denmark. These two propositions having been made—the one disastrous to the integrity, and the other to the independence of Denmark—the conference, nevertheless, even with these sacrifices offered, was a barren failure.”

At what conclusion, he asked, and loud were the cheers that the question called forth, could the House arrive as to the management of foreign affairs by the government? Ministers had pledged themselves to maintain the independence and integrity of Denmark, and they had miserably betrayed the faith reposed in them. Denmark had been tempted into resistance, and when the hour of trial came upon her, had been deserted by the very power who had held out hopes of aid and support. Austria had been menaced; Prussia had been menaced; but the threats had been idle, and ministers had stood on one side, and had basely eaten their words. No one blamed France for the course she pursued, for she had held out no hopes; everyone blamed England, for she had held out hopes, and then had declined to fulfil them. “Do you see,” cried Mr Disraeli, “in the management of these affairs that capacity, and especially that kind of capacity, that is adequate to the occasion? Do you find in it that sagacity, that prudence, that dexterity, that quickness of perception, and those conciliatory moods which we are always taught to believe necessary in the transaction of our foreign affairs? Is there to be seen that knowledge of human nature, and especially that peculiar kind of science most necessary in these affairs—an acquaintance with the character of foreign countries, and with the chief actors in the scene? For my part, I find all these qualities wanting; and in consequence of the want of these qualities, I see that three results have accrued. The first is that the avowed policy of Her Majesty’s government has failed. The second is that our just influence in the councils of Europe has been lowered.

Thirdly, in consequence of our just influence in the councils of Europe being lowered, the securities for peace are diminished.”

What could be more humiliating than the position of England? he continued. We had given advice, and our advice had been scorned. We had pleaded, and our prayers had not been listened to. We had menaced, and our threats had been received with ridicule. Within twelve months we had twice been repulsed at St. Petersburg. Twice had we supplicated in vain at Paris. We had menaced Austria, and Austria had allowed our menaces to pass her like the idle wind. We had threatened Prussia, and Prussia had defied us. Our objurgations had rattled over the head of the German Diet, and the German Diet had treated us with contempt. What a situation for a great power! What a situation for a power which was essentially a moderating and mediatorial power! “It is not for us,” concluded Mr. Disraeli, “it is not for any man in this House, to indicate to the ministers what should be the foreign policy of the country. The most we can do is to tell the noble lord what is not our policy. We will not threaten, and then refuse to act. We will not lead on our allies with expectations we do not intend to fulfil. And, sir, if it ever be the lot of myself, and of those with whom I act, to carry on important negotiations of this country, as the noble lord and his colleagues have done, I trust we shall not, at least, carry them on in such a manner as that it will be our duty to come to Parliament and announce that we have no ally, and then to declare that England can never act alone. Sir, these are words that ought never to have escaped the lips of any British minister. They are sentiments which ought never to have entered his heart. I repudiate them and reject them. I remember that there was a time when England had not a tithe of our resources, when, inspired by a patriotic cause, she triumphantly encountered a world in arms. And, sir, I believe now, if the occasion were fitting, and our independence and our

honour were attacked and assailed, if our empire were endangered, I believe that England would arise in the magnificence of her might, and struggle triumphantly for those objects for which men live and nations flourish. But, sir, I for one will never consent to go to war to extricate British ministers from the consequences of their own indiscretion; and it is in this spirit that I have drawn up this address to the crown. I have drawn it up in the spirit in which the royal speech was delivered at the commencement of this session. I am ready to vindicate the honour of this country when it is necessary, but I have drawn it up in the interests of peace."

This resolution led to a debate which lasted four nights, and in which all the conspicuous parliamentary ability of the hour took part. It was felt that the fall of the government turned upon the verdict of the House, and both sides exerted their utmost to obtain votes, and by their strictures and abuse to weaken the onslaught of their opponents. In whose favour the decision would result was doubtful, for both parties were fairly equally divided, and Lord Palmerston had created various enemies among his own party on account of his meddling, yet humiliating foreign policy, his extravagance in the erection of the different fortifications, and his abandonment of the cause of reform. In the House of Lords the resolution of Lord Malmesbury had been carried by a majority; but a Liberal government is generally in a minority among the peers, and therefore the decision, since it was expected, did not have much weight. The interest of the country was confined to the division of the House of Commons; even the most sanguine Liberal could not feel assured that his party would be victorious. "It will be a near thing," said a sporting member; "but 'Pam.' for choice."

The chancellor of the exchequer followed Mr. Disraeli. He justified the course adopted by the government, and denied that the influence of England had been lowered in the councils of Europe. The

policy of ministers had been to bring Denmark to fulfil her engagements of 1852, and to cause Prussia and Austria to moderate their views. The government, it was true, had failed to obtain the co-operation of the powers, but the parties really responsible for the consequences of the failure, were those who first receded from the treaty. After the refusal of France and Russia, the tone of the government had of course altered, since the interference of England single-handed would have been useless. Mr. Gladstone was especially severe upon the wording of Mr. Disraeli's resolution. It was nothing better, he said, than the echo of the ribald language of a few obscure journals of Germany. "This is the very first occasion," he cried, "that the British House of Commons has been called upon, for the sake of displacing a government, to record the degradation of its country. Why cannot the hon. gentleman speak plainly in his motion? Why does he not adopt the language of our forefathers, who, when they were dissatisfied with a government, addressed the crown, and prayed that the government might be dismissed? They said boldly that the conduct of the government was open to such and such charges, and they prayed that other men might be put in their places. But the right hon. gentleman was afraid to raise that issue. He has, indeed, plucked up courage to propose this motion; but why has he not done it in the proper constitutional form in which votes of want of confidence have hitherto been drawn? Never before, as far as I know, has party spirit led gentlemen in this country to frame a motion which places on record that which must be regarded as dishonourable to the nation. I go back to the time of Sir Robert Walpole, of Lord North and Mr. Fox, but nowhere do we find such a sterile and jejune affair as this resolution. Those charges were written in legible and plain terms; but the right hon. gentleman substitutes language which might, indeed, be sufficient for the purpose of rendering it impossible for the

government to continue in office, but which cannot transfix them without its sting first passing through the honour of England. For the reasons I have stated, I look forward with cheerfulness to the issue which has been raised with regard to our conduct. Nay, more, I feel the most confident anticipation that both the House and the country will approve of the course taken in this difficult negotiation by Her Majesty's government, and that they will respect a motion which both prudence and patriotism must alike emphatically condemn."

Mr. Kinglake moved that the following words be substituted for the last paragraph of the resolution:—"To express the satisfaction with which we have learned that at this conjuncture Her Majesty has been advised to abstain from armed interference in the war now going on between Denmark and the German powers." He did not consider, he said, that the strength of England had been impaired by the recent negotiations. He objected to encouragement being given by strong powers to weaker powers to resist, and he could not find that in any instance the government had advised the Danes to resist. Lord Stanley, Mr. Cobden, and Mr. Roebuck, all spoke in condemnation of the foreign policy of the government. Mr. Horsman, as became so original a genius, took a line of his own. He admitted that the foreign policy of the government had failed; but he did not consider that the failure had been so injurious to our national influence that the government deserved censure. The House had acquiesced in the policy of the government, and had even directed it. The policy of the government was only ministerial; and if the country had been dishonoured, it was not by the ministry but by parliament. By holding their peace the Opposition had incurred a complicity in every act of the government, and therefore responsibility for the consequences. Mr. Horsman then discussed at length the Danish question, offering his advice freely upon all points in dispute. The

conclusion he arrived at was that the government had made mistakes, but the Opposition had endorsed them—so that parties were pretty much on an equality.

The comic man upon the occasion was Mr. Bernal Osborne, and he was very funny; he did not hold office, and this neglect from his party doubtless added both point and venom to his criticisms upon the chief of the cabinet. He was not anxious, he observed, to pass judicial sentence upon the proceedings of the government in the Dano-German question. Their failure had to some extent involved the honour of the country, and although he rejoiced at the return of ministers to the paths of peace, the country had no reason to be proud of the means. However, it was his opinion that the individual mainly to blame for complication and failure was the prime minister. "Let us see," he said amid the loud laughter of the House, "how his ministry is constituted. There is the noble lord the first minister. I wish to speak of him with every respect, because a more active and able man in the performance of his duty has seldom existed in this House. I may say of him that 'panting time toils after him in vain.' He is certainly *facile princeps*, and is the liveliest, if not the youngest, man on the treasury bench. He deserves credit for his admirable management of affairs during a long course of years. He has acted with all sorts of men, and agreed with all sorts of opinions. Why, he has contrived a most extraordinary feat—he has conciliated both the Low Church and the high Tory party. The *Record* acknowledges his inspiration, and the hon. member for North Warwickshire (Mr. Newdegate), bows to his influence. These are great feats. But what is his policy? In his domestic policy he is paternal, but stationary. His foreign policy up to this day has been pugnacious and progressive. But now he is about to achieve the most wonderful feat of his life, for he is about to go to the country as the apostle and minister of peace, and will be supported by the member for Birmingham.

That is the most extraordinary feat of the whole. I do not think I have been unfair to the noble lord. Well, coming to the cabinet, it is a museum of curiosities. There are some birds of rare and noble plumage, both alive and stuffed. But, unfortunately, there is a difficulty in keeping up the breed, and it was found necessary to cross it with the famous Peelites. I will do them the justice to say that they have a very great and able minister amongst them in the chancellor of the exchequer, and it is to his measures alone that they owe the little popularity and the little support they get from this Liberal party. But it cannot be said by their enemies or friends that they have been prolific in measures since they have been in office. Then there is my right hon. friend who is not connected with the Whigs by family (Mr. Milner Gibson).<sup>\*</sup> He is like some 'fly in amber,' and the wonder is how the devil he got there. The hon. member for Rochdale (Mr. Cobden) and the hon. member for Birmingham must have been disappointed, I think, in this 'young man from the country.' When he married into the family we expected some liberal measures from him; but the right hon. gentleman has become insolent and almost quarrelsome under the guidance of the noble lord. Well, what are we to expect? We know by the traditions of the great Whig party that they will cling to the vessel, if not like shipwrecked sailors, at least like those testaceous marine fish which adhere to the bottom, thereby clogging the engines and impeding the progress. Should a vote of this House displace the administration, what are the Liberal party to do? If I might advise the Liberal party, I should say they may be perfectly happy as to the issue of this great duel. They are somewhat in the position of Iago, when he exclaims—'If Cassio kill Roderigo or Roderigo kill Cassio, or each do kill the

other, every way makes my gain!' Even should this parliament decide on terminating its own and their existence, they will find consolation that the funeral oration will be pronounced by the hon. member for North Warwickshire, and that some friendly hand will inscribe on their mausoleum, 'Rest and be thankful.'"

Lord Palmerston then entered upon his defence. To divide upon the resolution of Mr. Disraeli might have been hazardous; so, like the astute tactician he was, he accepted the amendment of Mr. Kinglake. He began by warmly upholding the policy of Earl Russell; he maintained that England stood as high as ever in the estimation of Europe; and declared that the assertion that the influence of the country had been lowered, was a gratuitous libel upon the nation by a great party who hoped to rule it. Then cleverly avoiding any further discussion upon the subject, he spoke at length upon the benefits the country had derived from his government—how taxation had been reduced, how the national debt had been diminished, how the public expenditure had been cut down, and how the income or the trade of the country had been increased. Such being the case, he thought the government had conducted the affairs of the country with honour and advantage, and in a manner deserving the approbation of the House. He was confident that the acceptance of Mr. Disraeli's resolution would not be in accordance with the general feeling of the people of the country.

Upon the fourth night the leader of the Opposition rose up to close the debate. The tone of the discussion, he said, had fully justified the course he had taken, for, in spite of the numerous speeches, none had refuted the arguments he had brought forward, or had satisfactorily denied the charges he had directed against the government. It had been said that the course he had taken was open to objection. If the government had mismanaged the affairs of the country, the Opposition ought to have

<sup>\*</sup> Mr. Milner Gibson began political life as a Conservative. Having changed his opinions, he became one of the most prominent members of the Anti-Corn Law League, and during the Crimean war was a stout advocate for peace.

addressed the crown to dismiss the ministers. He contested that view. Take the case of the fall of the administration of Lord Shelburne. A peace had been concluded with France, Spain, and America, the independence of our colonies being recognized. Lord Shelburne negotiated that peace. The papers were laid on the table; the Opposition did not approve that peace; and how did they proceed? Did they address the crown for the dismissal of ministers? On the contrary, they took a perfectly different course, but not so decided a course as he himself had recommended, and was prepared to vindicate. They proceeded by resolution. Lord George Cavendish moved among others "That the concessions made to the adversaries of Great Britain were greater than they were entitled to." That was not only a proceeding by resolution, but by a resolution which showed at least that the government had granted concessions which they were not entitled to make. He had, therefore, a precedent for proceeding by way of resolution.

It had also been brought against him, continued Mr. Disraeli, that there was something unparliamentary, even disgraceful, in the House of Commons proposing, in an address to the crown, to make an allusion to the just influence of the country being lowered. It was language, it was said, which, in the great days of the Norths and the Foxes, would never have been adopted. Again he would illustrate his position by a precedent. He took the address moved by Mr Fox on one of the most celebrated occasions of the kind that had ever occurred. If Her Majesty's ministers preferred to accept it instead of his own, which was a more modest address, adapted to the temperate spirit of the time, he would be perfectly ready to make arrangements to that effect. This is what Mr. Fox said in his address to the crown:—"We can neither give any credit to the ministry for their profession of a wish for peace, nor repose any confidence in their capacity for conducting negotiations to prosperous issues, odious as they are to

any enemy, and contemptible in the eyes of Europe, from the display of insincerity and incapacity which has marked their conduct." Those were the expressions used by Mr. Fox in his address to the crown in 1796. He, quietly remarked Mr Disraeli, had not used such language in his own address.

In his opinion, proceeded the leader of the Opposition, the course the government had resolved upon to meet this discussion was neither frank nor straightforward. The real question at issue was this—"Is the House, or is it not, satisfied with the administration of the government in these negotiations?" It was a vote of want of confidence in the conduct of ministers. Why, then, did the government fall back upon the amendment of Mr. Kinglake? What was that amendment? It was the "previous question" drawn up by an amateur diplomatist, and moved by the historian of the campaign in the Crimea, as a compliment, he supposed, to the Emperor of the French. "The issue before the House," said Mr. Disraeli, "will be the amendment of the hon. member for Bridgewater, which gives no approbation to the conduct of the government, as far as I can understand it; although they argue on the merits of their case, the government will not take the opinion of the House boldly upon it. That, I think, is not acting with the fairness we should have expected from the government."

Mr. Disraeli then touched upon the advice so freely tendered by the member for Stroud, and conferred upon Mr. Horsman one of those stinging nicknames which sums up a character in a word or two, and which henceforth becomes inseparable from the individual thus re-christened. Mr. Horsman was a very prominent member of the Liberal party; he had held office, and was undoubtedly a power in the House of Commons. His influence, however, would have been greater in the assembly had he possessed a less exalted opinion of his own judgment, and a more complimentary estimate of the intelligence of the rest of mankind. He was one of those men who

never descend from the moral and intellectual pedestal upon which their intense egotism has raised them; he inclined neither to argument nor to conversation, but to lecture, to warn, to advise, to constitute himself on every occasion "Sir Oracle." These were his delight, and it must frankly be owned that it was a joy he freely availed himself of. He considered his sentiments as opinions, and he mistook his prejudices for ideas. He piqued himself upon his originality; but his originality chiefly consisted in holding opinions different from the rest of the world around him. Mr. Horsman had taunted the Opposition for not interfering sooner, and therefore had accused them of complicity with the government. Why, then, asked Mr. Disraeli, had not Mr. Horsman himself interfered? Why had he not moved in this question? "He denounces the government," cried Mr. Disraeli; "he derides the Opposition; he detests the peace party; he attacks the whole body of the House of Commons; and he lectures parliament as a body, and every individual in particular, with a recklessness of assertion unequalled." Yet all that this sweeping critic had done in the matter had been, some months ago, to put on paper a motion which was without exception the most unconstitutional that had ever been placed on the table of the House of Commons—a motion which had not been moved, and which, had it been moved, would have been left without a teller had it been put to the vote. "We know," said Mr. Disraeli, "that in private life there is always in every circle some person, male or female, who is regarded as a *superior person*. They decide on everything, they lecture everybody; all acknowledge their transcendent qualities; but everyone gets out of their way. The right hon. member for Stroud is the 'superior person' of the House of Commons." This definition of character, and its application, were received with shouts of laughter, and from that night Mr. Horsman passed into history, so long as it should care to preserve his name, as the "superior person."

On the division the tactics of Lord Palmerston prevailed; the numbers for Mr. Disraeli's motion were 295; for the amendment, 313; majority for ministers, 18. The victory was greeted with loud and continued cheers from the ministerialists, and it was felt that the result of the contest had tended greatly to strengthen the hands of the government. It was the last important debate of the session, and parliament was prorogued by commission July 29, 1864.

Before the close of the year Mr. Disraeli delivered another of his important speeches (November 25, 1864) on the policy of the Church of England. It was on the occasion of a meeting held in aid of the Oxford Diocesan Society for the augmentation of small benefices, at which the Bishop of Oxford presided. After a few observations upon the conclusion which public opinion had now arrived at with regard to the necessity of the union between church and state, Mr. Disraeli recapitulated what he had before said on a similar occasion as to the various modes by which the nationality of the church might be assisted. These modes were education, a temperate plan for the extension of the episcopate, the co-operation of the laity with the clergy to erase from the public mind "that vulgar and pernicious error that the church is a merely clerical corporation," the assertion of the rights and duties of churchmen existing in their parochial constitution and secured to them by law, the maintenance of diocesan institutions, the formation of convocation on a broader basis and with a fuller representation of the parochial clergy,\* and the reconstitution of the tribunal of last appeal in matters spiritual. These measures formed a church policy, temperate, practical, yet perfectly efficient; and if carried out, would

\* "It is not necessary now, nor would it be convenient to enter into details on the subject. But I would just intimate that if the two provinces were united, the basis would be much broader; and at this moment, in the province of York, the parochial clergy are more fully represented than in the province of Canterbury. There is something, I think, ridiculous in the diocese of London, for example, with 1000 clergy, being only represented in convocation by two parochial clergymen."

cause the church to occupy a position of just influence and salutary power, which she had not for a long time filled.

"Well, my lord," proceeded Mr. Disraeli, "I had hoped that when I should have the honour of addressing you again on matters connected with these societies, I should have had to congratulate ourselves that the inconsistency, and timidity, and perplexity which have paralyzed the efforts of churchmen for so many years had entirely disappeared. I did think that cordial co-operation might have been obtained from all classes of churchmen after the significant manner in which the country has decided that no disunion between church and state should take place, but that the old constitution was, in its opinion, consistent with the fulfilment of the principle of religious liberty. I thought we might then have forgotten all our differences, and that we in this hearty and united spirit might have laboured with perseverance, with temper, with no anxiety for precipitate success, but with the determination of men who clearly see a practical object before them, for the attainment of the measures which I have noticed to-day, and which, as I have stated, form in my mind a complete church policy. But I am sorry to say I still find, at least in that part of the diocese with which I am particularly connected, difficulties existing, and, though they are different from those we have encountered before, paralyzing to a great degree the efforts which would be made for the support of the diocesan societies, and especially that which has called us together to-day. We are now told that the church is in a very difficult position—that its condition is not satisfactory; and these are made the arguments, and, no doubt, the conscientious grounds, for keeping aloof from associations like the present. But then I observe, in contrast with the difficulties which we had to encounter three or four years ago, that the nature of the difficulty is now very different. In old days, during the period of transition which I have sketched, the

church was accused of apathy, of having no hold on the feelings of the great mass of the population, of exercising little influence, and its fall was predicted in consequence. But the case is now changed. No one now accuses the church of apathy, no one now accuses the church of not possessing influence, of wanting intelligence; but it is still doomed; the church must still fall; it is still in as great danger as ever; and that danger comes not from an anti-church party, but from its own intestine condition, and the parties that exist in its own bosom.

"My lord, I am not here to deny or to regret the existence of parties in the church. Parties in the church have always existed. They existed in the church at Jerusalem. They existed in the church at Ephesus. They existed always in the church at Rome. And it would be most wonderful indeed if in a country like England, where party has always been recognized as the most efficient and satisfactory means of conducting public affairs, party should not be found in the church alone. My Lord, what is party? Party is organized opinion. And so long as the nature of man is of that various and varying character which we all know it is, so long will there be various and varying modes by which it will express itself, or by which it may be counselled, upon religious matters. There are some who find solace in symbolic ceremonies, and who feel that the religious sentiment can only be adequately satisfied by ecclesiastical services in that vein. There are others with whom the soul requires to be sustained by the ecstasy of spiritual enthusiasm. But so long as they who counsel or pursue these modes meet on the common platform of true church principles—and I hold that the acknowledgment of the church as the sacred depository of divine truth is the truest church principle—I do not think that such courses are to be regretted, but on the whole I have no doubt both schools of religious feeling have been beneficially and equally advantageous to the country and the church. And doubt-

less the two great parties in the church have effected as eminent service for true religion as the two great parties in the state have achieved for public liberty and the good government of the country.

"But there is yet another party," continued Mr. Disraeli, alluding to the Rationalists (the work entitled "Essays and Reviews," and the criticisms of Bishop Colenso on the Pentateuch, then exciting much attention), "to which I must for a moment refer, because no doubt the influence of that party upon that cordial co-operation of churchmen by which alone these societies can be effectually supported is considerable, and I cannot pretend that it is advantageous. Now, that is a party described by an epithet which I observe a distinguished prelate of the church has adopted in a recent address to his clergy, but which appears to me to be an epithet that I should not use within these walls, for it is hardly as yet entered into the category of classical expression. It is an epithet, my lord, that would imply a particular degree of comprehension. But whilst fully acknowledging the abilities, the eloquence, and the knowledge of this new church party, I must say that there is a peculiarity about the comprehension which they attempt to accomplish. Hitherto there has been nothing new in a church party aiming at the comprehensive; but then they have always wished to include all those who believed anything; whereas the remarkable peculiarity of the comprehension of the party to which I now refer is, that they seem to wish to include everybody who believes nothing. Now there is no doubt that the influence of the new party is very injurious to the society whose interests have called us together to-day; and if we attempt to get rid of the difficulty by avoiding to speak about it, we in fact do not remedy our position, but the deleterious process from which we are suffering goes on without any effort on our part to oppose its evil consequences. The church having, as I think, successfully encountered the unsatisfactory condition of mind among church-

men which was the consequence, and the long consequence, of the change in the constitution; having overcome that difficulty, and churchmen having it in their power, by the measures to which I have referred, to place, by their cordial co-operation, the church in its proper position in this country, I will make a few remarks upon the new difficulty with which we have to deal—for it would be unwise to treat the existence and influence of this new party with contempt—and consider whether the difficulties which no doubt exist are insuperable, whether we must yield to them, or whether we have a prospect of overcoming them.

"Now, this new party is not founded upon the principle of authority, on which all church parties hitherto in this country, and in all countries to some degree, have been founded. But it is founded upon a very singular principle. It is founded upon the principle of criticism. Now, doubt is an element of criticism, and the tendency of criticism is necessarily sceptical. I use the epithet in a philosophical, and not in a popular or odious sense. It is quite possible, for example, that a party founded upon the principle of criticism may arrive at conclusions which we may deem monstrous. They may, for example, reject inspiration as a principle and miracles as a practice. That is possible. And I think it quite logical that, having arrived at such conclusions, they should repudiate creeds and reject articles of faith, because creeds and articles of faith cannot exist or be sustained without acknowledging the principle of inspiration and the practice of miracles. All that I admit; but what I do not understand, and what I wish to draw the attention of this assembly and of this country generally to is this—that, *having arrived at these conclusions, having arrived conscientiously at the result that, with their opinions, they must repudiate creeds and reject articles, they should not carry their principles to their legitimate end, but that, repudiating creeds and rejecting articles, they are still sworn*



*supporters of ecclesiastical establishments—  
fervent upholders of dignitaries of the church  
—even of rectors, vicars, and curates.*

"Now this is a matter of most serious importance, not merely for us to consider as churchmen, but for the country generally to consider, whatever may be its opinions or forms of faith—for the consequences may be very critical. If it be true, as I am often told it is, that the age of faith has passed, then the fact of having an opulent hierarchy, supported by men of high cultivation, brilliant talents and eloquence, and perhaps some ambition, with no distinctive opinions, might be a very harmless state of affairs, and it would certainly not be a very permanent one. But then, my lord, instead of believing that the age of faith has passed, when I observe what is passing around us—what is taking place in this country, and not only in this country, but in other countries, and even hemispheres—instead of believing that the age of faith has passed, I hold that the characteristic of the present age is a craving credulity. Why, my lord, man is a being born to believe. And if no church comes forward with its title-deeds of truth, sustained by the tradition of sacred ages and by the conviction of countless generations to guide him, he will find altars and idols in his own heart and his own imagination. But observe this. What must be the relations of a powerful church, without distinctive creeds, with a being of such a nature? Why, of course, the chief principle of political economy will be observed. Where there is a great demand there will be a proportionate supply; and commencing, as the new school may, by rejecting the principle of inspiration, it will end by every priest becoming a prophet; and beginning as they do by repudiating the practice of miracles, before long, rest assured, we shall be living in a flitting scene of spiritual phantasmagoria. There are no tenets however extravagant, and no practices however objectionable, which will not in time develop, under such a state of affairs, opinions

the most absurd, and ceremonies the most revolting—

——Qualia demens  
Ægyptus portenta colat"—

perhaps to be followed by the incantations of Canidia and the Corybantian howl.

"But consider the country in which all this may take place. Dangerous in all countries, it would be yet more dangerous in England. Our empire is now unrivalled for its extent; but the base—the material base—of that empire is by no means equal to the colossal superstructure. It is not our iron ships; it is not our celebrated regiments; it is not these things which have created, or indeed really maintain our empire. It is the character of the people. Now I want to know where that famous character of the English people will be if they are to be influenced and guided by a church of immense talent, opulence, and power without any distinctive creed. You have in this country accumulated wealth that never has been equalled, and probably it will still increase. You have a luxury that will some day peradventure rival even your wealth. And the union of such circumstances with a church without a distinctive creed will lead, I believe, to dissoluteness of manners and of morals rarely equalled in the history of man, but which prepares the tomb of empires.

"There is another point in connection with this subject which I cannot help noticing on the present occasion. It is the common cry—the common blunder—that articles of faith and religious creeds are the arms of a clergy, and are framed to tyrannize over a laity. They are exactly the reverse. The precise creed and the strict article are the title-deeds of the laity to the religion which has descended to them. And whenever these questions have been brought before Parliament, I have always opposed alterations of articles and subscriptions on this broad principle—that the security and certainty which they furnish are the special privileges of the laity, and that you cannot tell in what position

*the laity may find themselves, if that security be withdrawn.* Perhaps I ought to apologize for having touched upon this subject; but it appears to me—I know it from my own experience—to be one vitally connected with the affairs that have called us here to-day, because the opinions of the new school are paralyzing the efforts of many who ought to be our friends. Let us venture to ask ourselves this question:—Will these opinions succeed? Is there a possibility of their success? My conviction is that they will fail. I wish to do justice to the acknowledged talents, the influence, and information which the new party command; but I am of opinion they will fail—for two reasons. In the first place, having examined all their writings, I believe without any exception—whether they consist of fascinating eloquence, diversified learning, and picturesque sensibility (I speak seriously what I feel), and that too exercised by one honoured in this university, and whom to know is to admire and regard; or whether you find them in the cruder conclusions of prelates who appear to have commenced their theological studies after they had grasped the crozier, and who introduce to society their obsolete discoveries with the startling wonder and the frank ingenuousness of their own savages; or whether I read the lucubrations of nebulous professors, who seem in their style to have revived chaos; or lastly, whether it be the provincial arrogance and the precipitate self-complacency which flash and flare in an essay or review—I find that the common characteristic of their writings is this, that their learning is always second-hand.\*

“I do not say that because learning is second-hand it may not be sound, or that knowledge, because it is second-hand, may not be true; but this I do say, without any fear of denial from any man competent to give an opinion upon the subject, that there is something in original research so invigor-

ating to the intellect, and which so braces and disciplines the human mind, that those who have undergone that process arrive at their conclusions with great caution and with great circumspection. But when a man of brilliant imagination has to deal with a vast quantity of facts furnished by the labours of others, he is tempted to generalize with a fatal facility, and often arrives at conclusions which in time he has not only to repudiate, but which sometimes he is destined to refute.

“In the second place, when I examine the writings of those who have been the masters of the new school in this learning—men who undoubtedly have gone through the process of original research, and have not found their equals for learning and perseverance and erudite assiduity for many generations, the great scholars of Germany—I find this in their labours: doing full justice to their eminent qualities, I find this in their labours, that there is really nothing new. I admit their distinguished qualities. As Hebraists they are equal to the great scholars of the eighteenth, and who flourished at the end of the seventeenth century. In their knowledge of the cognate Semitic dialects they are infinitely superior. In the new theory or science of language, as it is justly called, they have of course an advantage over the old scholars, because it is a science that has only been developed in our own time. But this I do say, that in all important conclusions, from the alleged materials of the book of Genesis down to the formation of the Canon, and in every important event, historical, literary, and spiritual, that occurred in that long interval, they have been anticipated by the great Hebrew scholars who flourished in the eighteenth and at the end of the seventeenth century.†

“I know it may be said that the suggestions of an Astruc and the investigations of a Father Simon were known only to those who, like them, lived in their cells and col-

\* If the Biblical Studies of Heinrich von Ewald had never appeared, what would have become of the criticism and conclusions of our “Broad Church” divines?

† “What are all the schoolmen, Aquinas himself, to Maimonides? And as for modern philosophy, all springs from Spinoza.”—*Canning*.

leges; but this is a vulgar and delusive error. The learned labours of those men formed the mind and inspired the efforts of the two most intellectual bodies of men that have existed certainly since the Greek philosophers—for I think they were superior to the schoolmen—the freethinkers of England and the philosophers of France. Therefore the conclusions of these eminent scholars were thoroughly placed before the public mind. All that inexorable logic, irresistible rhetoric, bewildering wit, could avail to popularize those views were set in motion to impress the new learning on the minds of the two leading nations of Europe—the people of England and the people of France. And they produced their effect. The greatest of revolutions was, I will not say, occasioned by those opinions; but no one can deny that their promulgation largely contributed to that mighty movement popularly called the French Revolution, which has not yet ended, and which is certainly the greatest event that has happened in the history of man. Only the fall of the Roman empire can be compared to it; but that was going on for centuries, and so gradually, that it cannot for one moment be held to have so instantaneously influenced the opinion of the world. Now, what happened? Look at the age in which we live, and the time when these opinions were successfully promulgated by men who, I am sure, with no intention to disparage the new party, I may venture to say were not unequal to them. Look at the Europe of the present day and the Europe of a century ago. It is not the same Europe. Its very form is changed. Whole nations and great nations, which then flourished, have disappeared. There is not a political constitution in Europe existing at the present time which then existed. The leading community of the continent of Europe has changed all its landmarks, altered its boundaries, erased its local names. The whole jurisprudence of Europe has been subverted. Even the tenure of land, which of all human institutions most affects the character of man, has been

altered. The feudal system has been abolished. Not merely laws have been changed—not merely manners have been changed—but customs have been changed. And what happened? When the turbulence was over—when the shout of triumph and the wail of agony were alike stilled—when, as it were, the waters had subsided, the sacred heights of Sinai and of Calvary were again revealed, and amid the wreck of thrones and tribunals, of extinct nations and abolished laws, mankind, tried by so many sorrows, purified by so much suffering, and wise with such unprecedented experience, bowed again before the divine truths that Omnipotence in His ineffable wisdom had intrusted to the custody and the promulgation of a chosen people!

“Well then, because all their learning is second-hand; because their conclusions are not new; because they have already been placed before the mind of man with a power and a spirit that it is vain to expect will be again equalled; because mankind have tried and rejected this new learning now bolstered up for our edification; I believe that the efforts of this new school, powerful as they are and influential at this moment, and most injurious to these diocesan societies, will fail.

“Before sitting down, there is only one other point on which I will venture briefly to touch. We are told every day that all I have feebly expressed to you may be true; but at the same time there is a characteristic of the present age which never existed in preceding ages, and which must be destructive to the church and to all religious establishments, and that is, the progress of science. The discoveries of science are not, we are told, consistent with the teachings of the church. Now I am sure there is not one in this theatre who is not prepared to do full justice to the merits of scientific men, and who does not fully appreciate those discoveries of science which have added so much to the convenience of life and to the comfort of man. But it is of great importance, when this tattle about science is mentioned, that we should annex to the

phrase precise ideas. I hold that the function of science is the interpretation of nature—and the interpretation of the highest nature is the highest science. What is the highest nature? Man is the highest nature. But I must say that when I compare the interpretation of the highest nature by the most advanced, the most fashionable and modish school of modern science, with some other teachings with which we are familiar, I am not prepared to say that the lecture-room is more scientific than the church. What is the question now placed before society with a glib assurance the most astounding? The question is this—Is man an ape or an angel? \*

"My lord, *I am on the side of the angels.* I repudiate with indignation and abhorrence the contrary view, which is, I believe, foreign to the conscience of humanity: more than that, even in the strictest intel-

\* The theory of evolution had never any attractions for Mr. Disraeli. In *Tancred* he thus deliciously makes a young blue-stocking describe the new doctrine:—"But what is most interesting is the way in which man has been developed. You know, all is development. The principle is perpetually going on. First, there was nothing; then there was something; then—I forget the next—I think there were shells; then fishes; then we came. Let me see—did we come next? Never mind that; we came at last. And the next change, then, will be something very superior to us—something with wings. Ah! that's it: we were fishes, and I believe we shall be crows."

lectual point of view, I believe the severest metaphysical analysis is opposed to such a conclusion. But, on the other hand, what does the church teach us? What is its interpretation of this highest nature? It teaches us that man is made in the image of his Creator—a source of inspiration and of solace—a source from which only can flow every right principle of morals and every divine truth. I say, therefore, that when we are told that the teachings of the church are not consistent with the discoveries of science, and that in that sense the inferiority of the church is shown, I totally deny the proposition. I say that the scientific teaching of the church upon the most important of all subjects is, in fact, infinitely superior to anything that has been brought forward by any of those new discoveries. In fact, it is between those two contending interpretations of the nature of man, and their consequences, that society will have to decide. Their rivalry is at the bottom of all human affairs. Upon our acceptance of that divine interpretation for which we are indebted to the church, and of which the church is the guardian, all sound and salutary legislation depends. That truth is the only security for civilization, and the only guarantee of real progress."

## CHAPTER XXI.

### A MORIBUND PARLIAMENT.

AT the opening of parliament—a parliament which had reached its last session—there was little to excite or depress the national mind. On all sides quiet and monotony reigned supreme. With the exception of a little contest with the Maoris in New Zealand and a dispute with Japan, England was in the enjoyment of perfect peace. Trade was flourishing and the revenue buoyant. The cotton famine no longer prostrated the industry of Lancashire, and there were evident signs that the business in the manufacturing districts of that county was reviving. The harvest of the preceding year had been abundant, and had consequently tended to mitigate the pauperism of the country. The civil war in America still continued, but it was plain that the Southern States were losing heart and that their powers of resistance were being rapidly exhausted. Denmark had come to the conclusion that it was useless to kick any longer against the pricks and had made peace with her foes, preferring to be deprived of her duchies of Schleswig, Holstein, and Lauenburg, rather than to continue fighting against such unequal odds. The British North-American provinces had resolved to enter into a Federal union under the supremacy of the British crown, and were busy preparing their

scheme of amalgamation. A treaty had been concluded between France and Italy, by which France agreed to evacuate Rome, and Italy arranged to transfer the seat of government to Florence. All these matters were perfectly well known; and therefore, in the speech from the throne delivered by the lord chancellor, February 7, 1865, on the occasion of the legislature meeting for the despatch of business, there was little information that the public mind had not already discounted.

The country was informed that “the negotiations in which the Emperor of Austria and the King of Prussia were engaged with the King of Denmark were brought to a conclusion by a treaty of peace; and the communications which Her Majesty receives from foreign powers lead her to entertain a well-founded hope that no renewed disturbance of the peace of Europe is to be apprehended.” Then allusion was made to the civil war in America, and to the resolve of England to remain “steadfastly neutral between the contending parties;” to the dispute with Japan; and to the “little war” in New Zealand. The desire of the North-American provinces to enter into Federal union was approved of, and would be fully considered.\* The work of the session was foreshadowed; “various

\* Resolutions were passed (Oct. 10, 1864) at a conference of delegates from Canada, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Newfoundland, and Prince Edward's Island, held at Quebec, respecting the scheme of a Federal union of those provinces and colonies, under the supremacy of the British crown. On that occasion it was resolved:—That the best interests and present and future prosperity of British North America will be promoted by a Federal union under the crown of Great Britain, provided such union can be effected on principles just to the several provinces. That in the Federation of the British North-American provinces, the system of government best adapted under existing circumstances to protect the diversified interests of the several provinces, and secure efficiency, harmony, and permanency in the working of the Union, would be a general government charged with matters

of common interest to the whole country, and local governments for each of the Canadas, and for the provinces of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward's Island, charged with the control of local matters in their respective sections; provision being made for admission into the Union, on equitable terms, of Newfoundland, the North-west Territory, British Columbia, and Vancouver. That in framing a constitution for the general government, the conference, with a view to the perpetuation of our connection with the mother country, and to the promotion of the best interests of the people of these provinces, desire to follow the model of the British constitution so far as our circumstances will permit. That the executive authority or government shall be vested in the Sovereign of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and be administered, according to the well-

measures of public usefulness will be submitted for your consideration;" the courts of law and equity were to be removed to "a convenient site;" and bills relating to the revision of the statute law, to patents for inventions, to the relief of the poor, and to educational matters were to be discussed and to become law. Such was the ministerial programme, which was certainly neither an alarming nor an exciting document. "The speech from the throne," said Lord Derby, "is one of just such a character as might naturally have been expected to be addressed by an aged minister to a moribund parliament. The days of the parliament are numbered. No medical skill or science can prolong its existence beyond a period of a very few weeks. Its condition, as far as the protraction of its life is concerned, is absolutely hopeless. All that the most eminent physicians can do for it is to take care that its dying moments are disturbed by no unnecessary excitement, that no distracting influences may disquiet its last hours or interfere with the peace of its fleeting moments, and that it may be supplied with just so much gentle occupation as may tranquilly engage its thoughts. The physicians will, of course, continue to the last to hold their formal consultations on the state of the patient, receive their accustomed fees, and waft it serenely towards its final rest." In the debate on the address Mr. Disraeli, for

the first time for many sessions, took no part.

One important subject had been omitted from the speech from the throne, which might have been included. During the past few months the condition of Canada had been a source of alarm to many in the mother country. It was feared that if the North wished to vent its spite against England, whose sympathies throughout the civil war had been so manifestly enlisted on the side of the Southerners, and assume the aggressive, the defenceless position of Canada would offer an easy prey to the American arms. Already it had been thought by the more timorous, that the United States were exhibiting signs of a feeling hostile to England. Shortly before the meeting of parliament, President Lincoln had given formal notice to our Minister of his intention to terminate the convention under which England and the United States had mutually agreed not to fit out naval armaments upon the Canadian lakes. At the same time it was also hinted at Washington that the treaty of commerce between the United States and the North-American provinces might come to an end. These proposals caused no little alarm; and though the government of Lord Palmerston did not participate in the anxiety of the country, still ministers thought it prudent not to completely ignore the possible dangers of the situation. Accordingly a

understood principles of the British constitution, by the sovereign personally, or by representative duly authorized. That the sovereign, or representative of the sovereign, shall be commander-in-chief of the land and naval militia forces. That there shall be a general legislature for the federated provinces, composed of a Legislative Council and House of Commons. That for the purpose of forming the Legislative Council, the federated provinces shall be considered as consisting of three divisions:—1st, Upper Canada; 2nd, Lower Canada; 3rd, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward's Island, with equal representation in the Legislative Council. That Upper Canada be represented in the Legislative Council by 24 members, Lower Canada by 24 members, and the maritime provinces by 24 members, of which Nova Scotia shall have ten, New Brunswick ten, and Prince Edward's Island four members. That the colony of Newfoundland shall be entitled to enter the proposed Union, with a representation in the Legislative Council of four members. The North-west Territory, British Columbia, and Vancouver shall be admitted into the Union on such terms and conditions as parliament shall deem equitable, and as shall receive the assent of Her Majesty; and, in the case of

the province of British Columbia or Vancouver, as shall be agreed to by the legislature of such province. The general government and legislature shall have all powers necessary or proper for performing the obligations of the province, as part of the British empire, to foreign countries, arising under treaties between Great Britain and such countries. The local government and legislature of each province shall be constructed in such manner as the existing legislature of such province shall provide in the Act consenting to the Union. That in regard to all subjects over which jurisdiction belongs to both the general and the local governments, the laws of the Federal parliament shall control and supersede those made by the local legislature, and the latter shall be void so far as they are repugnant to or inconsistent with the former. That both the English and French languages may be employed in the general legislature and in its proceedings, and also in the local legislature of Lower Canada, and in the Federal and local courts of Lower Canada. The Confederation shall assume all the debts and liabilities of each province. All engagements that may be entered into with the Imperial government for the defence of the country shall be assumed by the Confederation.

distinguished officer of Engineers, Colonel Jervois—now Sir William Jervois, the governor of South Australia—was instructed to report upon the defences of Canada, and to ascertain how far such fortifications could protect the frontier from invasion, and at what expense they could be placed in a more invulnerable condition. Colonel Jervois carried out his instructions with despatch, and the result of his investigations was at once made public. As soon as his report appeared it was carefully perused, and became the subject of a debate in both Houses of parliament. In the opinion of Col. Jervois the Canadian frontier was utterly defenceless to resist invasion, and accordingly the government immediately took steps to strengthen the colony. Sums were asked from parliament to be expended upon the defence of Quebec, whilst the Canadian government were to erect fortifications at Montreal.

The attention of the House of Commons was called to the question by Mr. Seymour Fitzgerald. He acquitted the government of the United States and the more educated portion of their people of any feeling of hostility towards England; but it would be worse than madness, he said, not to perceive what might happen under certain circumstances. Canada was unprotected; and it was now a question, according to Colonel Jervois, whether we should withdraw the British force from the colony so as to save our troops from defeat, or increase them to such strength as would constitute an effective defence. To call home our forces would be humiliating and disastrous; therefore he suggested that measures for effective defence should at once be taken. Mr. Cardwell, the secretary for the colonies, replied that earthworks were being raised at Quebec and Montreal; and though the relations between England and the United States were at present perfectly friendly, the government was perfectly alive to the dangers that might arise. If the time ever came, he remarked amid the cheers of the House, that Canada should be at war, war

with Canada would also signify war with England.

To him succeeded Mr. Disraeli (March 13, 1865). He supported the government. "I am not here to-night," he said, "to impute, and I have never imputed anything against the conduct of the government of the United States throughout this great struggle;\* but on the contrary, I am now prepared after further experience to repeat what I said two years ago, that, under circumstances of almost unprecedented difficulty, that government has conducted itself with great energy and discretion. I am not of opinion that, in the event of the termination of the American war, we should be placed in any immediate danger of coming into collision with that government owing to our connection with Canada. I do not pretend now to express any opinion as to what may be the termination of the present contest, as it appears to me to be quite foreign to the question under discussion; but, even assuming that the result may be such as is anticipated by the hon. member for Bradford [Mr. W. E. Forster, who predicted that the North would be victorious], I do not believe that the citizens of the United States of the North, even if entirely and completely victorious, will feel inclined to enter immediately into another struggle with a power not inferior in determination and in resources to the Southern states of America. I form that opinion, because I believe that the people of the United States are eminently a sagacious people. I don't

\* Praise from an adversary is seldom undeserved. In the course of the debate, Mr. Bright compared the reticent and statesmanlike conduct of Mr. Disraeli throughout the civil war with the hasty and passionate expressions of sympathy with the South which had often been indulged in by certain members of the Conservative party. "Now," said the member for Birmingham, "if I were to give advice to the hon. gentlemen opposite it would be this—for while stating that during the last four years many noble lords in the other House have said foolish things, I think I should be uncan-did if I did not say that you also have said foolish things—learn from the example set you by the right hon. gentleman. He [Mr. Disraeli], with a thoughtfulness and statesmanship which you do not all acknowledge, did not say a word from that bench likely to create difficulty with the United States. I think his chief and his followers might learn something from his example."

think they are insensible to the glory of great dominion and extended empire, and I give them equally credit for being influenced by passions which actuate mankind, and particularly nations which enjoy such freedom as they do. But they are a sagacious people, and I don't think they would seize the moment of exhaustion as being the most favourable for the prosecution of an enterprise which would require great resources and great exertions.

"There are other reasons which also induce me to dispute that opinion. I have not been influenced in forming my judgment upon points of such vast importance by that sort of rowdy rhetoric which has been expressed at public meetings and in certain journals in America, and upon which some people in this country found their conclusions as to the possible character and opinions of the American people. I look upon these expressions of opinion as I should look upon those strange and fantastic drinks of which we hear so much, and which are such favourites on the other side of the Atlantic; and I should as soon suppose this rowdy rhetoric was the expression of the real feelings of the American people as that these potations formed the aliment and nutriment of their bodies. There is another reason why this violent course will not be adopted. The democracy of America must not be confounded with the democracy of the Old World. It is not formed of the scum of turbulent cities, neither is it merely a section of an exhausted middle-class, which speculates in stocks, and calls that progress. It is a territorial democracy. Aristotle, who has taught us most of the wise things we know, never said a wiser one than this—that the cultivators of the soil are the least inclined to sedition and to violent courses. Now, being a territorial democracy, their character has been formed and influenced in a manner by the property with which they are connected, and by the pursuits they follow; and a sense of responsibility arising from the reality of their possessions may much

influence their political conduct. And I believe they are very much more inclined to welcome the returning labourers to their fields, to see around them the products of the earth, and to behold happiness in those households to which they are so much attached, than to plunge into the miseries of a new and terrible war.

"But although these are my opinions generally, I cannot conceal from myself that very great changes have taken place in America of late years; and these changes I have reason to believe are not regarded in this House with sufficient seriousness, while in my opinion they amount to no less than a revolution. I will ask hon. members to recall to themselves the state of North America when we met in this House four years ago. That portion of the world was then divided among what we may call three great powers—first, the United States of America; secondly, Canada, and the settlements and dependencies belonging to our own sovereign; and thirdly, Mexico, a country which certainly did not possess much political power, but which in extent, resources, fertility of soil, and mineral wealth, was almost unequalled in the world. In every one of these three divisions there have been immense changes. In the United States a civil war has raged for four years, and even if that war should terminate as the hon. member for Bradford suggests, I cannot believe that we shall see the same society and form of government established—or even if the form be the same, certainly the spirit will be altered—as existed before the civil war commenced. We must recollect that even if the Federal government should be triumphant, it will have to deal with most perplexing questions and with a discontented population. I need not dwell much upon the then state of the Southern community, but the slave population will then be no longer slaves; there will be several millions of another race emancipated and invested with all the rights of freemen, and, so far as the letter of



the law is concerned, they will be upon an equality with the Saxon race, with whom they can possibly have no sympathy. We know from experience and practice that there is a difference between those who are recently emancipated and that—I will not call it a superior race, because that might offend hon. gentlemen opposite; nor will I call it an inferior race, but a race that is not identical with the other—nothing tends more to the discontent of a people than that they should be in possession of privileges and rights which practically are not recognized, and which they do not enjoy.

“These are the elements of political discontent, and it is possible that when this war is over the American government may have to deal with great masses of discontented population. To do this successfully you must have a strong government. What does that mean? Why, you must have a centralizing government; and the American government have found it necessary to have recourse to the centralizing principle during these events. The government must have an army at its command, in order to maintain the order and unity that it is bound to uphold. These are the elements that cannot fail to produce great difficulties in the United States, even if they come triumphant out of the struggle in which they are engaged. But what is the position of the colonies and dependencies of Her Majesty in that country? Four years ago, when this struggle broke out, there was very little in common between them. The tie that bound them to this country was almost one of formality; but what has been the consequence of this great change in North America? You have now a powerful federation, with the element of nationality strongly evinced in it; they count their population by millions, and they are conscious that they have a district more fertile and an extent of territory equal to the unappropriated reserves of the United States. These are the elements and prognostics of new influences that have changed the character of that country. Nor is it

without reason that they do not feel less of the ambition which characterizes new communities than the United States, and that they may become, we will say, the Russia of the New World. Well, what is also the condition of Mexico? Four years ago, when this war broke out, Mexico was a republic with a weak government. It is now an empire, and it has become so by the interposition of two of the most ancient states of Europe—France and Austria.\* When we see all these immense changes it is impossible to deny that in North America a great revolution is occurring, and that when this struggle is over, when peace reappears and tranquillity is re-established, you will find these communities governed by very different influences, and aiming at very different objects.

“I have often heard statesmen, and distinguished statesmen, mumbling over the balance of power in Europe. It has appeared to me always to be a great mistake, when we look to the distribution of power, to confine our views to Europe, because we shall find, and perhaps speedily find, that there are other influences in other quarters of the globe which will interfere to disturb our calculations. It seems to me that this war in America has rapidly precipitated the change. It shows us that the proper meaning of ‘balance of power’ is security for communities in general against a predominant and particular power, and that you have to take into your consideration states and influences that are not to be counted among the European powers. It is impossible, notwithstanding what hon. gentlemen may say about the character of the United States, to conceal that there is a feeling among those influential landowners to whom the hon. gentleman the member for Bradford referred, with regard to Europe of a peculiar character. I will not say that they look to old Europe with feelings of jealousy or

\* The Archduke Ferdinand Maximilian of Austria received (April 10, 1864) a Mexican deputation at Miramar, and consented to accept the imperial dignity under the title of Maximilian I., emperor of Mexico.

vindictiveness, because epithets and words of that kind ought not to be unnecessarily used with respect to the relations between nations; but it is undeniable that the United States look to old Europe with a want of sympathy. They have no sympathy with a country that is created and sustained by tradition; and the only country to which they look with sympathy is that part of old Europe which is new. I have always observed this in their conduct. It is quite clear, then, it is impossible to know what relations may exist between the United States, this country, and Her Majesty's dependencies on the other side of the Atlantic. Taking these larger views, then, we ought to consider that, not to-morrow or next year, but now we are on the eve of events of very great importance. The question we have to ask ourselves is, Is this country prepared to renounce her American dependencies and colonies, or are we to retain that tie? Now, if these colonies expressed a wish to separate the connection, and if they preferred to be absorbed by the United States, we might terminate our connection with dignity and without disaster. But if, on the other hand, those views are just which are more generally accepted—if there should be on the part of Canada and the other North American colonies a sincere and deep desire to form a considerable state and develop its resources, and to preserve the patronage and aid of England until that mature hour when we shall lose our dependency, but gain a permanent ally and friend—then it would be the greatest political blunder that can be conceived for us to renounce, relinquish, and avoid the responsibility of maintaining our interests in Canada at the present moment.

"If, from considerations of expense, we were to quit the possessions that we now occupy in North America, it would be ultimately, as regards our resources and wealth, as fatal and disastrous a step as could possibly be taken.

Our prosperity would not long remain a consolation to us, and we might then prepare for the invasion of our country and the subjugation of the people. I infer that hon. gentlemen opposite do not express these views, which have, however, found utterance in other quarters; but that they take a truly patriotic and English view of this subject—namely, not to force our connection on any dependency; but if, at a moment of revolution in North America, we find our colonies asserting the principle of their nationality, and if, foreseeing a glorious future, we find them still depending on the faithful and affectionate assistance of England, it would be the most short-sighted and suicidal policy to shrink from the duty that Providence has called upon us to fulfil. What is the course which we ought to take under these circumstances? I cannot doubt that it is our duty to place our North American colonies in a state of proper defence; and when we are told that you cannot defend a frontier of 1500 miles, I ask who has ever required you to defend a frontier of 1500 miles? What we recommend and require—I do not speak of this side of the House, but of those generally who hold these views—is to see that our troops in Canada are not placed in a position in which the utmost bravery and skill are of no avail, but that they should defend that country according to military practice. Austria does not attempt to defend the whole of her frontier; but she provides a good army, and takes care that when her territory is invaded there shall be points round which her troops may rally, and which they may occupy against superior strength. We wish to see Canada placed in such a condition that if she has to be defended by her countrymen, assisted by the troops of Her Majesty, they may have the fair-play the troops have a right to expect, by having fortifications constructed with sufficient skill to double the number of her army, and insure the success of a campaign.

"That is what we trust Her Majesty's

ministers have determined to do. I think that these four years need not have been lost, and that from the first the affairs of North America have not been considered of the importance to which they have now attained, and which from the first I have felt they must attain. I do not wish to employ taunts, but I form that opinion from judgments which have been expressed by members of Her Majesty's government during the last four years. Those judgments upon the struggle in America and its probable consequences have been for the most part inconsistent. One day we were told by an eminent member of the government that the South might be said to have completed her independence, and speeches have been made which led all England to suppose that a diplomatic recognition of the Southern States was to be expected. Very shortly afterwards another great authority, now lost to this House, and no one deplures that loss more deeply than myself—I mean the late Sir George Lewis—told us that he did not recognize the existence of a single element of political independence in the South. Well, these inconsistent opinions perplexed the country, and have shown that from the first the government have never taken that view of the situation which we had a right to expect. One day we were led to believe from the highest authority in the government, that there was on their part the utmost sympathy with those who were struggling in the Southern States; while, on the other hand, the minister whose judgment upon such matters has, of course, peculiar weight, and which was particularly watched by foreign countries, expressed opinions of a totally different character.

"Sir, I do not blame Her Majesty's government because, in a position of extreme difficulty, they have made mistakes and formed opinions inconsistent with each other; but what I do regret is the consequence of those discordant opinions on their part—namely, that all this time Her Majesty's colonies have not been defended

as we are now all agreed they should be, with the possibility of dangers hanging over them; that we have lost four years, and are now about to make an effort on a very small scale, and necessarily with very limited resources. But, sir, that is after all but a very little matter, provided we are now following a sound principle. If the parliament of England is determined to maintain our connection with the colonies of Her Majesty, founded upon an unequivocal expression of opinion on their part that to that connection they cling with feelings of a character which shows that the national sentiment is perfectly unimpaired; if they prove that the reports and rumours which have been circulated of late years respecting the feelings of the colonies are wholly unfounded, and that they themselves are resolved to maintain it until they emulate us in our great career and become our rivals as well as our allies and friends—then I shall not regret what has occurred. It appears to me that there are two consequences of public opinion being of late agitated upon this topic—that we are conscious now of what our duty to the colonies is, and that we are prepared to fulfil that duty in a manner which I doubt not will conduce to the strength and independence of the British empire."

In consequence of this debate four members of the executive council of Canada proceeded to England to confer with the government as to the arrangements necessary for the Canadian defences in the event of war with the United States. As we know, no such war took place.

The interest which this discussion excited led indirectly to a loss which both the country and the House of Commons could ill sustain. Mr. Cobden had been for some months in failing health. Towards the close of the preceding year he had aggravated a bad attack of bronchitis by addressing a large audience at Rochdale, and he had been ordered rest and change of climate. His desire, however, to take part in the debate on the Canadian fortifications, in order to

oppose the policy of the government, was too keen to be repressed, and he hastened up to London for the occasion. Immediately after his arrival he was laid prostrate by an attack of asthma. For several days he fought with death, then the asthma became congestion, and bronchitis supervened. A few hours after this complication had ensued all was over. "Many tears," writes his biographer, "were shed in homes where Cobden's name was revered and loved when the tidings that he was dead reached them." Whatever opinions may be passed upon the political views of Mr. Cobden—and in this work we have seldom had occasion to agree with them—there can be no doubt but that the once famous advocate of free trade was a great force in the state, and exercised an influence over the minds of the masses which it was impossible for the most prejudiced to ignore. The political creed of Mr. Cobden was a simple one. He held that the love of intervention in foreign politics was the great curse of our policy—an opinion which caused him cordially to dislike Lord Palmerston, and to regret that he had ever voted to turn out the government of Lord Derby and Mr. Disraeli. He looked upon Ireland as our severest home difficulty, and he considered that the United States was the great economical rival which would rule the destiny of England. The life of Mr. Cobden was spent in maintaining propositions opposed to the current of public opinion, and consequently the man, as a politician, was far from popular. Still all respected his noble disinterestedness, his moral courage, and the fidelity he displayed to the principles he professed. The loss which the country sustained by the death of Mr. Cobden was gracefully alluded to in the House of Commons as soon as the sad event became known.

"The two great achievements of Mr. Cobden's life," said Lord Palmerston, "were, in the first place, the abrogation of those laws which regulated the importation of corn, and the great development which that gave to the industry

of the country; and, in the second place, those commercial arrangements which he negotiated with France, and which have largely tended to improve the trade and extend the commercial intercourse of the two countries. When this last achievement was accomplished it was my lot to offer to Mr. Cobden those honours which the crown could bestow for such important services, and which were not derogatory for him to accept; but that same disinterested spirit which regulated all his private and public conduct led him to decline those honours which might most properly have recognized and acknowledged his public services. I can only say that the country has sustained a loss, and every man in it."

On behalf of the Opposition, the tribute paid by Mr. Disraeli was equally eulogistic (April 3, 1865). "Having been a member of this House," he said, "when Mr. Cobden first took his seat, and having remained in the House during the whole of his lengthened career, I cannot reconcile it to myself to be silent on this occasion, when we have to deplore the loss of one so eminent, and that, too, in the ripeness of his manhood and the full vigour of his intellect. Although it was the fortune of Mr. Cobden to enter public life at a time when passions ran high, and he himself by no means a man insensible to political excitement, still when the strife was over there was soon observed in him a moderation and a tempered thought that intimated a large intellectual horizon, and the possession of statesmanlike qualities. Though formed in the tumult of popular opinions, with which he identified himself, there was in his character a vein of reverence for tradition which, even unconsciously to himself, subdued and softened the acerbity of the cruder conclusions to which he may have arrived. That, in my mind, is a quality which in some degree must be possessed by any one who aspires to sway this country; for, notwithstanding the rapid changes in which we live, and the numerous improvements and alterations we

anticipate, this country is still old England, and the past is one of the elements of our power. Of Mr. Cobden's conduct in this House all present are aware, yet perhaps I may be permitted to say that as a debater he had few equals. As a logician he was close, complete, acute, perhaps even subtle; yet at the same time he was gifted with such a degree of imagination that he never lost sight of the sympathies of those whom he addressed; and so, generally avoiding the driving of his argument to extremities, he became as a speaker both practical and persuasive.

"The noble lord, who is far more competent than myself to deal with such subjects, has referred the House to Mr. Cobden's conduct as an administrator. It would seem that, notwithstanding his eminent position, and the various opportunities which offered for the exercise of that ambition which he might legitimately entertain, his life was destined to pass without his being afforded an occasion of showing that he possessed those qualities invaluable in the management of public affairs. Still, fortunately, it happened that before he quitted us there came to him one of the greatest opportunities ever offered to a public man, and it may be justly said that by the transaction of high affairs he obtained the consideration of the two leading countries of the world. There is something mournful in the history of this parliament, when we remember how many of our most eminent and valued colleagues have gone from among us. I cannot refer to the history of any other parliament which will bear to posterity so fatal a record. But there is this consolation when we remember these unequalled and irreparable visitations—that these great men are not altogether lost to us; that their opinions will be often quoted in this House, their authority appealed to, their judgments attested, even their very words will form part of our discussions and debates. There are, I may say, some members of parliament who, though they may not be present in the

body, are still members of this House—who are independent of dissolutions, of the caprice of constituencies, and even of the course of time. I think Mr. Cobden was one of those men. I believe that when the verdict of posterity is recorded on his life and conduct, it will be said of him that, looking to all he said and did, he was without doubt the greatest political character the pure middle class of this country has yet produced—an ornament to the House of Commons, and an honour to England."

Mr. Bright was too much moved to trust himself to deliver the speech which might have been expected of him. "I am," he said, in tones almost inaudible, "utterly unable to address the House; but the sympathy shown on all sides for my departed friend has deeply gratified me. I cannot now attempt to utter the feelings with which I am overwhelmed. At some calmer moment, when I may have the opportunity of addressing my countrymen, I will endeavour to show the lesson which I think may be learned from the life and character of my friend. I can only say that, after many years of most intimate and most brotherly friendship with him, I little knew how much I loved him until I found that I had lost him."

The House was soon to be called upon to regret the loss of another famous man, whose sudden death is among the most dramatic incidents of our time. During the performance at a theatre in Washington President Lincoln was shot through the head by one John Wilkes Booth, the son of an actor once well known in England as the rival of the great Kean. "It has become my distressing duty," wrote Mr. Stanton to the American minister in London, "to announce to you that last night his Excellency Abraham Lincoln, president of the United States, was assassinated about the hour of half-past ten o'clock, in his private box at Lord's Theatre. The president, about nine o'clock, accompanied Mrs. Lincoln to the theatre. Another lady and gentleman were within the box. About

half-past ten, during a pause in the performance, the assassin entered the box, the door of which was unguarded. He hastily approached the president from behind, discharging a pistol at his head. The bullet entered the back of his head, and penetrated nearly through. The assassin then leaped from the box on to the stage, brandishing a large knife or dagger, and exclaiming '*Sic semper tyrannis!*' and escaped in the rear of the theatre. Immediately upon the discharge the president fell to the floor insensible, and continued in that state till twenty minutes past seven this morning, when he breathed his last."

When the news of this terrible deed reached Europe it called forth the fiercest indignation, and the warmest expressions of sympathy towards the Lincoln family. The late president had few enemies, and his loss throughout the civilized world was sincerely mourned. A man of the people, he had by his industry, his high sense of honour, and talents of no mean order, risen from the humblest surroundings to the highest post in the gift of the United States. "His occupying the chair of state," said Mr. Emerson, "was a triumph of the good sense of mankind and of the public confidence. This middle-class country has got a middle-class president at last. Yes, in manners, sympathies, but not in powers, for his powers were superior. His mind mastered the problem of the day; and, as the problem grew, so did his comprehension of it. Rarely was man so fitted to the event. In the midst of fears and jealousies, in the Babel of counsels and parties, this man wrought incessantly with all his might and all his honesty, labouring to find what the people wanted, and how to obtain that. It cannot be said there is any exaggeration of his worth. If ever a man was fairly tested he was. There was no lack of resistance, nor of slander, nor of ridicule. The times have allowed no state secrets; the nation has been in such a ferment, such multitudes had to be trusted, that no secret could be kept. Every door

was ajar, and we know all that befell. Then what an occasion was the whirlwind of the war! Here was place for no holiday magistrate, no fair-weather sailor; the new pilot was hurried to the helm in a tornado. In four years—the four years of battle-days—his endurance, his fertility of resources, his magnanimity, were sorely tried, and never found wanting. There, by his courage, his justice, his even temper, his fertile counsel, his humanity, he stood, an heroic figure in the centre of an heroic epoch. He is the true history of the American people in his time. Step by step he walked before them; slow with their slowness, quickening his march by theirs; the true representative of this continent; an entirely public man; father of his country, the pulse of twenty millions throbbing in his heart, the thought of their minds articulated by his tongue."

Throughout England there were but two feelings upon the subject—abhorrence of the crime and sympathy for the widow and the country mourning so terrible a loss. With her own hand the queen—ever tender, from painful experience, of the domestic sorrows of others—wrote a letter of condolence to Mrs. Lincoln. All over the kingdom public meetings, testifying their respect for the great American statesman, were held. In both houses of parliament addresses were moved "expressing the feeling of sorrow and indignation with which the House regards the perpetration of this atrocious crime, and sympathy with the government and people of the United States, humbly praying Her Majesty, in communicating to the government of the United States her condolence in this matter, to convey at the same time an expression of deep feeling on the part of the House."

In the House of Commons it fell to the lot of Mr. Disraeli (May 1, 1865) to second the motion, and he acquitted himself of his task with the usual delicacy of sentiment and good feeling which were always on these occasions so conspicuous.

"There are rare instances," he said, "when

the sympathy of a nation approaches those tenderer feelings which are generally supposed to be peculiar to the individual and to be the happy privilege of private life; and this is one. Under any circumstances we should have bewailed the catastrophe at Washington; under any circumstances we should have shuddered at the means by which it was accomplished. But in the character of the victim, and even in the accessories of his last moments, there is something so homely and innocent that it takes the question, as it were, out of all the pomp of history and the ceremonial of diplomacy—it touches the heart of nations and appeals to the domestic sentiment of mankind. Whatever the various and varying opinions in this House and in the country generally on the policy of the late President of the United States, all must agree that, in one of the severest trials which ever tested the moral qualities of man, he fulfilled his duty with simplicity and strength. Nor is it possible for the people of England at such a moment to forget, that he sprang from the same fatherland and spoke the same mother tongue. When such crimes are perpetrated the public mind is apt to fall into gloom and perplexity, for it is ignorant alike of the causes and the consequences of such deeds. But it is one of our duties to reassure them under unreasoning panic and despondency. Assassination has never changed the history of the world. I will not refer to the remote past, though an accident has made the most memorable instance of antiquity at this moment fresh in the minds and memory of all around me. But even the costly sacrifice of a Cæsar did not propitiate the inexorable destiny of his country. If we look to modern times, to times at least with the feelings of which we are familiar, and the people of which were animated and influenced by the same interests as ourselves, the violent deaths of two heroic men, Henry IV. of France and the Prince of Orange, are conspicuous illustrations of this truth. In expressing our

unaffected and profound sympathy with the citizens of the United States on this untimely end of their elected chief, let us not therefore sanction any feeling of depression, but rather let us express a fervent hope that from out of the awful trials of the last four years, of which the least is not this violent demise, the various populations of North America may issue elevated and chastened, rich with the accumulated wisdom and strong in the disciplined energy which a young nation can only acquire in a protracted and perilous struggle. Then they will be enabled not merely to renew their career of power and prosperity, but they will renew it to contribute to the general happiness of mankind. It is with these feelings that I second the address to the crown."

Upon the debate on the budget and upon the question of the disestablishment of the Irish Church Mr. Disraeli was silent.

Since the government of Lord Palmerston had abandoned the cause of reform, those ardent Liberals who declined to be a party to the desertion, and who were always prepared, session after session, to bring forward a measure which was, as Mr. Disraeli called it, to "tinker up" the constitution, were again to appear on the scene. Mr. Baines, the member for Leeds, who had identified his name with the project of lowering the rate of the elective franchise in the English boroughs, once more came forward to introduce a bill to extend the elective franchise in boroughs in England and Wales. His scheme was to extend the franchise to the occupiers of all houses of not less than six pounds in value. He gave expression to the customary objections and well-worn arguments against the existing state of things, and on the second reading of the bill an interesting debate ensued.

Lord Elcho moved the "previous question." Mr. Bernal Osborne complained that the Treasury bench had treated the question of reform in a very insincere spirit. Sir George Grey justified the government in the course they had taken in the past, and

voted for the second reading of the bill. Mr. W. E. Forster held that as education was extended so ought the suffrage to be extended. The most powerful speech on the Liberal side was, however, that delivered by Mr. Lowe—the precursor of those brilliant speeches on reform in the following year—who warmly opposed the measure. He asserted that the interests of the working classes were better represented and protected by the House of Commons as at present constituted than if the House were to be elected by the working men themselves; because in these times legislation was a complicated science, requiring men of the highest education and intelligence to put it into practice. He objected to the measure of Mr. Baines on account of its swamping tendency and democratic tone; it would cast the country loose from its only safe anchorage—the ten pounds franchise—and send her adrift upon the sea of democracy. He concluded by delivering an emphatic warning to those who sat on his side of the House. “And now I do solemnly ask the Liberal party,” he said, “to pass in review their own position with regard to this question. They have to make their choice, not merely on the fate which shall befall this particular bill, but with the full knowledge that a general election is to follow. And I ask whether it is to go forth that the party of liberality and progress in this country does or does not for the future cast in its lot and identify its fortunes with that particular form of government called democracy, which has never yet been the government of this country. It is a momentous issue which we have to try; and nothing but a sense of its enormous importance induces me to do what the House will believe is not a pleasant duty, to make my present speech in the neighbourhood in which I stand. I view this, however, as a question between progress and retrogression. So far from believing that democracy would aid the progress of the state, I am satisfied it would impede it. Its political economy is not

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that of Adam Smith, and its theories widely differ from those which the intelligent and clear-headed working man would adopt, did his daily avocation give him leisure to instruct himself. It is always introducing an ungrateful subject to make personal references, but perhaps I may be allowed for a moment to quote myself. Gentlemen think it the height of illiberality on my part, and believe that I am abandoning the cause of progress, because on this occasion I refuse to follow their steps. Of course I was quite prepared for that; but nevertheless I have been a Liberal all my life. I was a Liberal at a time and in places where it was not so easy to make professions of Liberalism as in the present day, and I suffered for my Liberal principles; but I did so gladly, because I had confidence in them, and because I never had occasion to recall a single conviction which I had deliberately arrived at. I have had the great happiness to see almost everything done by the decisions of this House that I thought should be carried into effect, and I have full confidence in the progress of society to a degree incalculable to us; and by the application of sound principles that the happiness and prosperity of mankind may be still further augmented. But for the very reason that I look forward to and hope for this amelioration, I regard as one of the greatest dangers with which the country can be threatened a proposal to subvert the existing order of things, and to transfer power from the hands of property, industry, and intelligence, and to place it in the hands of men whose whole life is necessarily occupied in daily struggles for existence. I earnestly hope—and it is the object I have in view—that I may have done something to pick this question out of the slough of despond in which it has wallowed. Sir, I have been weary and sickened at the way in which this question has been dealt with. The way in which the two parties have tossed this question from one to the other reminds me of nothing so much as a young lady and

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young gentleman playing at battledore and shuttlecock. After tossing the shuttlecock from one to the other a few times, they let it drop and begin to flirt. The great Liberal party may be presumed to know its own business better than I do. I venture, however, to make this prediction, that if they do unite their fortunes with the fortunes of democracy, as it is proposed they should do in the case of this measure, they will not fail in one of two things: if they fail in carrying this measure they will ruin their party, and if they succeed in carrying this measure they will ruin their country."

The leader of the Opposition also took a prominent part in the debate (May 8, 1865). Mr. Disraeli objected to the measure. He objected to it because an increase of the franchise in boroughs was a proposal to re-distribute political power in the country. He did not think that the distribution of political power in the country ought to be treated partially; from the very nature of things it was impossible, if there was to be a re-distribution of political power, that they could only regard the suffrage as it affected one section of the constituent body. Whatever the proposition of Mr. Baines—whether abstractedly it might be expedient or not—this was quite clear, that it must be considered not only in relation to the particular persons with whom it would deal, but in relation to other persons with whom it did not deal, though it would affect them. And, therefore, it had always been clear that if they dealt with the subject popularly called parliamentary reform they must deal with it, as he had often stated, comprehensively. The arrangements they might make with reference to one part of the constituency might not be objectionable in themselves, but might be extremely objectionable if they considered them with relation to other parts. Consequently, it had been held—and the more they considered the subject the more true and just appeared to be the conclusion—that if they dealt with the matter

they must deal with it as a whole. He then repeated the arguments he had before brought forward.

"Sir," he said, "the distribution of seats, as any one must know who has ever considered the subject deeply and with a sense of responsibility towards the country, is one of the most profound and difficult questions that can be brought before the House. It is all very well to treat it in an easy off-hand manner; but how are you to reconcile the case of North Cheshire, of North Durham, of West Kent, and many other counties, where you find a few towns, with an aggregate population, perhaps, of 100,000, returning six members to this House, while the rest of the population of the county, though equal in amount, returns only two members? How are you to meet the case of the West Riding in reference to its boroughs, or the case of the representation of South Lancashire in reference to its boroughs? Why, those are more anomalous than the case of Calne. Then there is the question of Scotland. With a population hardly equal to that of the metropolis, and with wealth greatly inferior—probably not more than two-thirds of the amount—Scotland yet possesses forty-eight members, while the metropolis has only twenty. Do you reformers mean to say that you are prepared to disfranchise Scotland in proportion to the population, or that you are going to develop the representation of the metropolis in proportion to its population and property, and so allow a country like England, so devoted to local government and so influenced by local feeling, to be governed by London? And therefore, when those speeches are made which gain a cheer for the moment, and are supposed to be so unanswerable as arguments in favour of parliamentary change, I would recommend the House to recollect that this as a question is one of the most difficult and one of the deepest that can possibly engage the attention of the country. The fact is, in the representation of this country other elements enter besides

merely population and property—you have to take care that the country itself is represented. That is one reason why I am opposed to the second reading of the bill—because it deals partially with the subject, and not completely and comprehensively.”

Mr. Disraeli objected also to the bill because it was brought forward by a private member; such a measure should only be introduced by the government. He denied that the question of reform had been trifled with either by Liberal or Conservative premiers in the past, as had been alleged. Then he dealt with the statement of Sir George Grey that it was only in 1860 that the portentous truth flashed across the mind of the country that the question of parliamentary reform was this—was it possible to admit a portion of the working classes to the enjoyment of the franchise without impairing the constitution of the country? Such was not the case. That was the question, and the only question, which had engaged the attention of Lord Derby's cabinet in 1858. The question was, whether they could secure the franchise for a certain portion of the working classes who, by their industry, their intelligence, and their integrity, showed that they were worthy of such a possession, without at the same time overwhelming the rest of the constituency by the numbers of those whom they admitted. That was the only question which occupied the attention of the government of Lord Derby; and yet Sir George Grey had declared that it was only in 1860 that the attention of the public was first called to the subject, when, in fact, the question of parliamentary reform had been before them for more than ten years, and on a greater scale than that embraced by the measure under consideration that evening!

“I need not remind the House,” continued Mr. Disraeli, “of the reception which Lord Derby's bill encountered. It is neither my disposition nor, I am sure, that of any of my colleagues, to complain of the votes of this House on that occasion.

nor to indulge in reproaches against any of its members. Political life must be taken as you find it, and so far as I am concerned not a word shall escape me on the subject. But from the speeches made the first night of this debate, and from the speech made by the right hon. gentleman [Sir George Grey] this evening, I deem it my duty to vindicate the conduct pursued by the party with which I act. I say we were perfectly well aware of the great question which it was our business to solve; and I say this now which I would not have said under other circumstances, that I believe that the measure which we brought forward was the only one which has attempted to meet its difficulties. Totally irrespective of other modes of dealing with the question, there were two franchises especially proposed on that occasion which, in my mind, would have done much towards solving them. The first was the franchise founded upon personal property, and the second the franchise founded upon partial occupation. Those two franchises, irrespective of other modes by which we attempted to meet the want and the difficulty—those two franchises, had they been brought into committee of this House, would in my opinion have been so shaped and adapted that they would have effected those objects which the majority of the House desire. We endeavoured in that bill to make proposals which were in the genius of the English constitution. It is easy to speak of the English constitution as a mere phrase. We did not consider the constitution a mere phrase. We knew that the constitution of this country is a monarchy tempered by the authority of co-ordinate estates of the realm. We knew that the House of Commons is an estate of the realm. We knew that an estate of the realm is a political body invested with political power for the government of the country and for the public good, therefore a body founded upon privilege and not upon right. It is therefore in the noblest and properest sense of the word an aristocratic body, and from the first the estate

of the Commons has had that character. From that characteristic the reform bill of 1832 did not derogate; and if at this moment we could contrive, as we proposed to do in 1859, to add considerably to the number of the constituent body, we should not change that characteristic, but it would still remain founded upon an aristocratic principle."

He defended Lord Derby's bill from the strictures passed upon it, and frankly stated that his views as to reform had not altered. "I have not," he said, "changed my opinion upon the subject of what is called parliamentary reform. All that has occurred—all that I have observed—all the results of my reflections lead me to this more and more—that the principle upon which the constituencies of this country should be increased is one not of radical, but, I would say, of lateral reform—the extension of the franchise, not its degradation. Although—I do not wish in any way to deny it—being in the most difficult position when the parliament of 1859 met, being anxious to assist the crown and the parliament by proposing some moderate measure which men on both sides might support, we did to a certain extent agree to some modification of the £10 franchise, yet I confess that my present opinion is opposed, as it originally was, to any course of the kind. I think that it would fail in its object; that it would not secure the introduction of that particular class which we all desire to introduce, but that it would introduce many others who are unworthy of the suffrage. But, sir, I retain these opinions; I think it is possible to increase the electoral body of the country, if the opportunity were favourable and the necessity urgent, by the introduction of voters upon principles in unison with the principles of the constitution, so that the suffrage should remain a privilege, and not a right—a privilege to be gained by virtue, by intelligence, by industry, by integrity, and to be exercised for the common good. And I think if you quit that ground—if you once admit that

every man has a right to vote whom you cannot prove to be disqualified for it, you would change the character of the constitution, and you would change it in a manner which will tend to lower the importance of this country.

"Between the scheme we brought forward and the measure now brought forward by the hon. member for Leeds, and the inevitable conclusion which its principal supporters acknowledge it must lead to, it is a question between an aristocratic government in the proper sense of the term—that is, a government by the best men of all classes—and a democracy. I doubt very much whether a democracy is a government that would suit this country; and it is just as well that the House, when coming to a vote on this question, should really consider if that be the issue—and it is the real issue—between retaining the present constitution—not the present constituent body, but between the present constitution and a democracy—it is just as well for the House to recollect that the stake is not mean—that what is at issue is of some price. You must remember, not to use the epithet profanely, that we are dealing really with a peculiar people. There is no country at the present moment that exists under the circumstances and under the same conditions as the people of this realm. You have, for example, an ancient, powerful, richly-endowed church and perfect religious liberty. You have unbroken order and complete freedom. You have landed estates as large as the Romans, combined with commercial enterprise such as Carthage and Venice united never equalled. And you must remember that this peculiar country, with these strong contrasts, is not governed by force; it is not governed by standing armies; it is governed by a most singular series of traditionary influences, which generation after generation cherishes and preserves because they know that they embalm custom and represent law. And, with this, what have you done? You have created the greatest empire of modern time.

You have amassed a capital of fabulous amount. You have devised and sustained a system of credit still more marvellous. And, above all, you have established and maintained a scheme so vast and complicated of labour and industry, that the history of the world offers no parallel to it. And all these mighty creations are out of all proportion to the essential and indigenous elements and resources of the country. If you destroy that state of society, remember this—England cannot begin again.

"There are countries which have been in great danger and gone through great suffering; the United States, for example, whose fortunes are now so perilous, and who in our own immediate day have had great trials; you have had—perhaps even now in the United States of America you have—a protracted and fratricidal civil war which has lasted for four years; but if it lasted for four years more, vast as would be the disaster and desolation, when ended the United States might begin again, because the United States then would only be in the same condition that England was at the end of the War of the Roses, when probably she had not even 3,000,000 of population, with vast tracts of virgin soil and mineral treasures, not only undeveloped but undreamt of. Then you have France. France had a real revolution in this century—a real revolution; not merely a political, but a social revolution. The institutions of the country were uprooted, the orders of society abolished—even the landmarks and local names removed and erased. But France could begin again. France had the greatest spread of the most exuberant soil in Europe, and a climate not less genial; she had, and always had, comparatively, a limited population, living in a most simple manner. France, therefore, could begin again. But England—the England we know, the England we live in, the England of which we are proud—could not begin again. I do not mean to say that after great troubles England would become a howling wilderness, or doubt that the good sense of the

people would to some degree prevail, and some fragments of the national character survive; but it would not be old England—the England of power and tradition, of credit and capital, that now exists. It is not in the nature of things; and under these circumstances I hope the House, when the question before us is one impeaching the character of our constitution, will hesitate—that it will sanction no step that has a tendency to democracy, but that it will maintain the ordered state of free England in which we live."

Mr. Disraeli then concluded by stating that the country did not desire any further change in the matter at present. The views on either side as to parliamentary reform were not sufficiently matured. The measure of Mr. Baines would reflect no credit on the House of Commons. It was a mean device, and he thought the house would best do its duty to the country if the measure was rejected by a decided majority. This advice was acted upon. On a division the amendment moved by Lord Elcho was carried by 288 votes against 214. The bill was therefore lost.

The one great subject which interested all members at this time was the approaching general election. There was nothing very important before the moribund House—except the Westbury scandal, in which Mr. Disraeli took no part beyond voting for the resolution of Mr. Ward Hunt\*—and members freely absented themselves from St. Stephen's to run down into the country and humour their constituents. It was known that the contest between the two parties would be keen, and men whose

\* This was the resolution:—"That the evidence taken before the committee of the House of Lords in the case of Leonard Edmonds, and laid before this House, shows a laxity of practice and a want of caution on the part of the lord chancellor in sanctioning the grant of retiring pensions to public officers over whose heads grave charges are impending, and filling up the vacancies made by the retirement of such officers, whereby great encouragement has been given to corrupt practices; and that such laxity and want of caution, even in the absence of any improper motives, are in the opinion of the House highly reprehensible, and calculated to throw discredit on the administration of the high offices of state." In consequence of the charges brought against him Lord Westbury resigned July 5, 1866.

seats were insecure regarded the future with trepidation; even those who did not anticipate opposition thought it prudent, by the issue of early addresses and the holding of political meetings, to explain to their supporters the views they held and the course they intended to adopt when returned to the new parliament. The address of Mr. Disraeli was the first (May 20, 1865) in the field. It ran as follows:—

“Although the state of public affairs is on the surface little disturbed, the impending appeal to the country involves consequences as momentous as any recurrence to its sense by the crown has perhaps hitherto offered. The maintenance of a national church involves the question—Whether the principle of religion shall be an element of our political constitution; whether the state shall be consecrated; or whether, dismissing the sanctions that appeal to the higher feelings of man, our scheme of government should degenerate into a mere system of police. I see nothing in such a result but the corruption of nations and the fall of empires. On the extension of the electoral franchise depends, in fact, the distribution of power. It appears to me that the primary plan of our ancient constitution, so rich in various wisdom, indicates the course we ought to pursue in this matter. It secured our popular rights by intrusting power not to an indiscriminate multitude, but to the estate or order of the Commons; and a wise government should be careful that the elements of that estate should bear a due relation to the moral and material development of the country. Public opinion may not perhaps be yet ripe enough to legislate on the subject, but it is sufficiently interested in the question to ponder over it with advantage; so that, when the time comes for action, we may legislate in the spirit of the English constitution, which would absorb the best of every class, and not fall into a democracy, which is the tyranny of one class, and that one the least enlightened. The leaders of the Conserva-

tive party, although they will never shrink from the responsibility of their acts, are not obtrusive candidates for office. Place without power may gratify the vain, but can never satisfy a noble ambition. Who may be the ministers of the queen is an accident of history; what will remain on that enduring page is the policy pursued and its consequences on her realm. That will much depend upon the decision and determination of the constituencies of the United Kingdom in the impending general election.”

The issue was soon to be decided. Parliament was dissolved (July 6), and at once addresses were placarded all over the country, and electioneering agents became busy with their canvass. The usual conflicting opinions were entertained as to the advantage to be derived by maintaining the present administration in power. Lord Palmerston thought he might be allowed to say for himself and his colleagues, “that a just judgment of our past administration will entitle us to the same measure of good-will which has been extended to us by the parliament now dissolved.” Mr. Bright held a different view, and expressed himself with the temperate frankness and high-bred courtesy which ever characterize him when treating of a rival, or when criticising opinions with which he has no sympathy. “The administration which, in 1859,” he said to his constituents, “climbed into office under the pretence of its devotion to the question of parliamentary reform has violated its solemn pledges. Its chiefs have purposely betrayed the cause they undertook to defend, and the less eminent members of it have tamely acquiesced in that betrayal. The ministry have for six years held office, which, but for promises they made, and which they have broken, they could not have obtained possession of even for a day. . . . The parliament is about to expire; the ministry will soon undergo such changes as will make it totter to its fall; but the question of reform lives, and at this moment in the eyes of its opponents.

takes a more distinct shape than at any other period since the passing of the bill of 1832. I trust the result of the coming general election will show that, notwithstanding the treachery of official statesmen and the indifference of the expiring parliament, the cause of freedom, based on a true representation of the nation, is advancing with an irresistible force to its final triumph."

A few days later Mr. Bright again alluded to the subject of reform, and at the same time availed himself of the opportunity to make a bitter attack upon Mr. Disraeli. The admirers of Mr. Bright are in the habit of attributing the power and pathos of his eloquence to a diligent study of Holy Writ. Whatever may be the basis upon which the oratory of the member for Birmingham is founded, it is certain that the vindictive spirit of the Old Testament possesses attractions for him which he is not slow to reproduce. "Five millions of grown-up men," he said, "had no direct representation in the House of Commons, in a country whose great foundation of government was a representative system and the representative principle. What was the answer made to this claim? The prime minister answers it by contemptuous silence. He has not referred to it in that long and carefully written address he has issued not only to the electors of Tiverton, but to the electors of the United Kingdom. But what says Lord Derby, speaking through the mouth of his prophet Disraeli? Why, he says, lateral extension of the franchise is what is wanted. He says to the great body of working men—to these five million men—It is true you are shut out; the Reform Bill was not satisfactory; the representation may be amended; your complaint is just, and we will admit—somebody else! Now, Mr. Disraeli is a man of brains, of genius, of a great capacity of action, of a wonderful tenacity of purpose, and of a rare courage. He would have been a statesman if his powers had been directed by any ennobling principle

or idea; but unhappily he prefers a temporary and worthless distinction as the head of a decaying party, fighting for impossible ends, to the priceless memories of services rendered to his country and to freedom, upon which only in our age an enduring fame can be built up. The 'fancy franchise' has failed. The lateral extension will also fail; we who advocate honest, open, clearly understood, and definite measures—we shall succeed." It is always amusing to recall predictions delivered in the most confident manner, which have been completely falsified. The advice of the American humorist is very sound, "Never prophesy unless you know."

The members for Buckinghamshire were returned without opposition. On the day of his election (July 13, 1865) Mr. Disraeli delivered a somewhat lengthy address to his constituents. He confined himself chiefly to two points—the necessity for a reform in the representation, and the dangers which menaced religion by the attempts to sever the union between church and state. On these two subjects he repeated what he had already frequently said in the House of Commons and on the platform at clerical meetings, and we may therefore dispense with fully recording his observations. He confessed himself an uncompromising and conscientious upholder of the Church of England. "Here you find," he said, "a powerful, learned, and wealthy corporation, the Church of England, which formerly was independent of the state, but which in time became allied to it. In its alliance with the state it acknowledges the supremacy of the crown, which I trust never will be lessened, for it is one of the key-stones of our liberty, civil as well as religious. You have this great corporation, which, while it has supplied the want consistently with the enjoyment of religious liberty by every subject of the state—at the same time providing spiritual instruction for all the subjects of Her Majesty—holds a position of independence that most favourably distinguishes it from the position of priest-

hoods which are salaried servants of the state, thus combining, as it were, toleration and orthodoxy, and giving to our institutions the consecrating character of religious connection. And it is proved that its existence is quite consistent with the ample and complete enjoyment of religious liberty by every one of Her Majesty's subjects." Then passing on to financial matters he criticised the last budget of Mr. Gladstone. He approved of the reductions effected by the chancellor of the exchequer, but he could not congratulate him on his originality. The budget had been much lauded because it reduced the duty on tea and lowered the income tax; yet in 1852 it was Mr. Disraeli who was the first to grapple with tea duties; and as for the income tax, when Mr. Disraeli quitted office he left that tax at the lowest rate it had ever stood at. He was very humorous as to what Mr. Gladstone had done with the terminable annuities.

"What had become of them," he asked? "Nobody knows," he replied. "It has been kept a profound secret; but as parliament has been dissolved I will tell you. It was a most wonderful thing. Parliament was assembled, the House was very full, as it always is when Mr. Gladstone is going to make a great speech or to perform some considerable feat. We knew that he was going to perform some considerable feat that night. He had £2,200,000 of taxation which was dying a natural death. It was a fund to which Englishmen had been looking for relief for half a century. There was not a sore or distressed interest in the country which did not say to itself, 'Ecce, when these terminable annuities fall in we shall have a chance.' The men who paid income tax said, 'Well, Peel took us in about that; he told us we should only have it for four years, and now it's increased, but there is an end to the longest lane, and when those terminable annuities fall in we shall have a good cut at the income tax.' My friend thought that the malt-tax payers would get a chance. Well, what did Mr. Gladstone do with them? It

was a feat of legerdemain which exceeded any conjuring of M. Robert. He took one million and turned it into ducks, then he took another million and turned it into drakes, and for half an hour these ducks and drakes flew cackling about the House of Commons, until at last we got ashamed of one another, and we ordered strangers to withdraw, and determined to keep it a profound secret until parliament was dissolved."

He did not, continued Mr. Disraeli, consider the commercial prosperity of the country so sound as many imagined. [The failures that followed one after the other in the ensuing year only proved how correct had been the estimate formed on this point by Mr. Disraeli.] As regards the treaty of commerce with France, the Liberals had been congratulated upon the policy they had introduced; yet that policy had not been originated by them, but only borrowed from their rivals. More than twenty years ago he himself had strongly advocated the signing of a treaty of commerce with France to relieve the distress of the country,\* but his views were treated with contempt by the free-traders then in the House. Again, when Lord Derby was in power in 1852,

\* During the debate upon the distress of the country (February 14, 1843) Mr. Disraeli warmly advocated the entering into a treaty of commerce with France in a speech which Mr. Morley—surely no favourable critic of Conservative suggestions—in his biography of Mr. Cobden, describes as "remarkable to this day for its large and comprehensive survey of the whole field of our commerce, and for its discernment of the channels in which it would expand." "Sign the treaty of commerce with France," cried Mr. Disraeli, "and that will give present relief. A treaty of commerce between England and France will do more for the town of Sheffield than both the Americas." To those who objected to treaties of commerce he said, "Why, the commerce of the world has been created by conventions—they were commercial treaties which first secured the persons and property of merchants." Again, "In forming connections with the states of Europe it was obvious that we could only proceed by negotiations. Diplomacy stepped in to weigh and adjust contending interests, to obtain mutual advantages and ascertain reciprocal equivalents. Our commerce with Europe could only be maintained and extended by treaties." For a Conservative, who based his commercial policy upon protection or reciprocity, there was no inconsistency in advocating commercial treaties with any country which would agree to exchange its goods for ours, since the very principle of a treaty of commerce is reciprocity. Mr. Disraeli did not object to commercial treaties, but he strongly objected to Liberals who had always been vaunting the advantages of "unrestricted competition" having recourse to negotiations which were carried on in direct violation of the principles of free trade.

one of the first actions of the Conservative government was to establish a treaty of commerce with France, and the negotiations only proved abortive because the government of Lord Derby were compelled by the factious conduct of the Opposition to resign their offices. What then became, he concluded, of the loud praises sung in honour of Liberal finance? The treaty of commerce with France, the reduction of the duties on tea, the lowering of the income tax, and the reduction of the public expenditure were all schemes originally proposed by the Conservative party, and now coolly advocated by the Liberals amid the applause of the nation. "In fact," said Mr. Disraeli, "the whole thing has been a genteel imposture from beginning to end, and if the 'parties,' as the phrase has it, did not move in eminent circles and occupy a distinguished position in life, they would have been taken before the lord mayor and punished for obtaining applause under false pretences."

The result of the election was in favour of the Liberals. In the city of London four Liberals were chosen. In Westminster Mr. John Stuart Mill, who held very advanced opinions upon the subject of reform, was returned at the head of the poll. Lambeth also showed its preference for Liberal opinions. The University of Oxford, however, declined to have anything any more to do with its member, and Mr. Gladstone began the pilgrimage he has since had to continue in search of a constituency by successfully appealing to the voters of North Lancashire. Of the 657 members returned to the new parliament 367 were described as Liberals, and 290 as Conservatives. In the change the Liberals lost 33 seats and gained 57. Liberalism, it was said, was henceforth to be dominant, and by the verdict of the country had entered upon a new lease of power. All the abuses so long complained of were now to be removed—parliament was to be reformed, church rates were to be abolished, the Protestant Church in Ireland was to be severed

from any connection with the state, vote by ballot was to become law, the land laws were to be remodelled, and, in fact, the programme of the extreme Liberal party was to be carried through without any omissions. A few of the advanced Radicals believed that the political millennium was about to be ushered in, and that the House of Lords was to be abolished, the Church of England disestablished, our colonies cast off, India handed over to her inhabitants, our naval and military establishments reduced to complete inefficiency, and the land bought up by the state to be divided among the people. There was now, it was triumphantly asserted, no obstacle to the development of Liberalism and the progress of revolutionary principles. The Conservative party was in a minority; Lord Palmerston was dying; Mr. Gladstone, since his rejection by his university, had owned that he was "unmuzzled"—a liberation which of course offered him greater facilities for eating his former words; Mr. Bright, who had hitherto been the representative of isolated opposition, was now in the new House of Commons, for the first time in his life, to develop into a formidable power in the House. Mr. Mill was also there, whilst those of the party who would have checked the republican ardour of advanced Liberalism—Sidney Herbert, Sir James Graham, Sir George Lewis, and others—had passed away from the scenes of political strife. It is not surprising that in the autumn of 1865 the Liberals were sanguine and confident. With Mr. Gladstone "unmuzzled" and leader of the Lower House, with Mr. Bright a power in the state, and with Mr. Mill, who "would open the suffrage to all grown persons, both men and women, who can read, write, and perform a sum in the rule of three, and who have not within some small number of years received parish relief," to what heights might not the Liberals soar—or, to speak more correctly, to what

"At last, my friends, I am come among you—and I am come, to use an expression which has become very famous, and is not likely to be forgotten, I am come among you 'unmuzzled.'"—*Mr. Gladstone at Manchester, July 18, 1865.*



depths might they not sink now that they were masters of the situation?

During the recess several events occurred of great importance, and some of which led to future parliamentary discussion. The cattle disease, commonly called the *rinderpest*, had broken out, and had advanced with such rapid strides throughout the country that a commission had been appointed to investigate the origin and nature of the disease, and to ascertain the mode of treatment best adapted for the cure of the infected animals, and for the prevention of the spread of the malady. In spite, however, of all precautions, the plague still continued its devastating progress, and during the autumn and winter mutton and beef advanced 20 per cent. above the rates of recent years. Another event which caused considerable anxiety also appeared at this time. Certain discontented Irish had formed themselves into a "Fenian Society," and, aided by funds from America, resolved to create a rebellion against the government, and sever Ireland from English rule. "The object of the leaders of this society," said Mr. Justice Keogh, "was to extend it through all classes of the people, but especially the artisans in towns and the cultivators of the soil; its ramifications existed not only in this country, but in the States of America; supplies of money and of arms for the purposes of a general insurrection were being collected not only here but on the other side of the Atlantic; and finally, the object of this confederation was the overthrow of the queen's authority, the separation of Ireland from Great Britain, the destruction of our present constitution, the establishment of some democratic or military despotism, and the general division of every description of property, as the result of a successful civil war." Happily, by the vigilance of Lord Wodehouse, the viceroy, the scheme was promptly, if not suppressed, at least considerably interfered with and thwarted. The conductors of the seditious press, which had been hounding on the ignorant Irish

to open resistance by their ribald and inflammatory articles, were arrested and imprisoned. A raid was made upon the Fenians in the various disaffected districts, and they were soon safely housed in the gaols of the country. Every precaution was taken to crush insurrection the moment it attempted to rear its evil head. The constabulary was increased, the military force in the island was strengthened, the public buildings were strongly guarded by police, and the penalties of the law were severely meted out to all who had been found guilty of traitorous designs. Before the year closed the arrest of a man called Stephens, termed in the language of the Fenian party "the head centre," inflicted a blow upon Irish disaffection which rendered its further efforts for a time more irritating than dangerous; but it soon recovered itself, and subsequently assumed such dangerous proportions as to necessitate the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act.

Across the Atlantic a graver revolt against English authority had burst forth, which, if not instantaneously checked, might have led to the most dangerous consequences. During the last few years the negroes in Jamaica, stimulated by the suggestions of the native Baptist ministers, a mischievous and disloyal class, had on various occasions openly expressed their discontent at the manner in which the island was governed. The smouldering disaffection only required an opportunity to burst forth into the flame of revolt. An occasion offered itself. Early in October a body of negroes marched down to Morant Bay to rescue a comrade about to be put on his trial for some trifling offence. A conflict ensued between the authorities and the negroes, and it eventually became necessary for the custos of the district to issue warrants for the apprehension of the more prominent of the rioters. Among these was one Paul Bogle, who, when the police were endeavouring to take him into custody, was surrounded by a body of armed blacks, who beat off the constables and compelled them

to swear that they would act against the government. A more formidable encounter now followed upon this proceeding in the square of the court-house at Morant Bay, the rebels easily defeating the few volunteers present, and then setting fire to the building. A murderous onslaught was now made on the defenceless white people of the district by the infuriated negroes, who were goaded on to inflict the most terrible atrocities upon helpless English women and children by the fiendish encouragement of Paul Bogle. "Skin for skin!" he cried; "the iron bars is now broken in this parish; the white people send a proclamation to the governor to make war against us, which we all must put our shoulders to the wheels and pull together. The Maroons sent the proclamation to meet them at Hayfield at once without delay, that they will put us in a way how to act. Every one of you must leave your house, take your guns; who don't have guns take your cutlasses down at once. Come over to Stony Gut, that we might march over to meet the Maroons at once without delay. Blow your shells! roll your drums; house to house take out every man; march them down to Stony Gut; any that you find take them in the way; take them down with their arms; war is at us, my black skins; war is at hand from to-day till to-morrow. Every black man must turn at once, for the oppression is too great; the white people are now cleaning up their guns for us, which we must prepare to meet them too. Chear, men, chear! in heart we looking for you a part of the night or before daybreak."

Upon intelligence of this revolt reaching Spanish Town, Governor Eyre, with the most commendable promptitude, at once proceeded to deal out such measures as would strike terror into the craven but brutal negroes, and prevent the insurrection spreading further into the island. It was one of those occasions when a firm and despotic policy has immediately to be enforced, if authority is to prevail over the

opposition of the semi-savage. To the hands of the governor of Jamaica were intrusted the lives and property of the whites, the honour of Englishwomen, and the protection of little children; and had he hesitated in the course he pursued, the island would have fallen an easy prey to the rebel blacks, whose barbarous instincts, once aroused, can only be crushed by a punishment as fierce and vindictive as it is instantaneous. To the negro—the lowest human being in the scale of creation—kindness, persuasion, and the rest of the moral influences are all thrown away during seasons of grave crisis; his vanity and ignorance but interpret them as so many signs of weakness and fear. Yet no one better than he understands and appreciates the opposition that supports its resistance by a free use of shot and sabre, by the punishment of the gallows, and by the terrors of vigorous scourging. Governor Eyre well knew the class of men with whom he had to deal—how swiftly the revolt would spread if weakness on the part of the authorities was apparent—how easily it could be crushed beneath an iron rule; and he chose to sacrifice the blacks, and to teach them a lesson they should long remember, rather than put in jeopardy for one moment the honour and welfare of the white population placed under his protection. As Cromwell had ruled Ireland, so Eyre now proceeded to rule Jamaica.

Troops were despatched by sea to Morant Bay; with the exception of the city of Kingston, the whole county of Surrey was placed under martial law; and punishment swiftly followed upon the verdict of guilty. When authority and rebellion come into conflict, and passion is at fever heat, there will be much in the efforts made in the cause of subjugation that must occasion regret. History has never yet had to record the rise, progress, and suppression of revolt, without having had occasion to express shame and remorse at the course often pursued by power to regain its lawful authority. "Bulgarian atrocities" stare us

in the face as we turn over page after page which describes how country after country has treated rebellion and stamped it out. In that passionate hour authority often declines to trouble itself with the justice that is tempered with mercy, with the parade of precedents, or as to the decision which vengeance more often than equity arrives at. All that it then cares about is to adopt the speediest means to crush the insurrection and to bring the leaders to punishment. It is to the end only it looks; the condemnation of the means it leaves to others. Afterwards, when the danger is past, when disaffection has been successfully suppressed, and when order and security once more reign supreme, then it is that the self-constituted critic, uninfluenced by the passions of the moment, and miles away from the scene of peril, calmly reviews the whole of the proceedings, and visits with his sternest condemnation the needless penalties that have been inflicted, and the hasty and vindictive fashion in which the law has been strained.

Such was the case with the suppression of the Jamaica insurrection. A turbulent and narrow-minded party at home, forgetful that the promptitude of the governor had saved the colony, remembered only how severe had been the floggings, how unjust had been several of the punishments, and how the guiltless had been made to suffer the extreme penalty of the law. A fierce outcry arose against Governor Eyre, and the feeling led to more than one exciting debate in the House of Commons. One case especially attracted considerable attention. Among the members of the House of Assembly—the representative chamber of Jamaica—was a coloured man with enough education to be mischievous and enough property to be important. His name was George William Gordon, and he combined the two callings—not unknown even in this country—of Baptist minister and political agitator. On the Sabbath he denounced the Enemy of all mankind, and on week-days he

denounced the English government. He was evidently a very seditious, a very active, and a very unscrupulous personage, with all the conceit and ignorance of the Dissenting divine, and all the fussy importance and culpable interference of the popular demagogue. He was discovered to be the chief agent of the insurrection, and brought to punishment. "I found everywhere," wrote Governor Eyre, "the most unmistakable evidence that George William Gordon, a coloured member of the House of Assembly, had not only been mixed up in the matter, but was himself, through his own misrepresentation and seditious language addressed to the ignorant black people, the chief cause and origin of the whole rebellion. Mr. Gordon was now in Kingston, and it became necessary to decide what action should be taken with regard to him. Having obtained a deposition on oath that certain seditious printed notices had been sent through the post office, directed in his handwriting, to the parties who had been leaders in the rebellion, I at once called upon the custos to issue a warrant and capture him. For some little time he managed to evade capture, but finding that sooner or later it was inevitable, he proceeded to the house of General O'Connor and there gave himself up. I at once had him placed on board the *Wolverine* for safe custody and conveyance to Morant Bay." He was tried by court-martial there, and hanged on the morning of the 23rd. "I have seen," wrote Eyre, "the proceedings of the court, and concur both in the justice of the sentence and the policy of carrying it out."

Unfortunately there were certain circumstances connected with this trial which gave the enemies of Eyre an opportunity for attack. Gordon had been arrested in Kingston, where martial law did not prevail; yet, contrary to all justice, he was removed to Morant Bay, then under martial law, and there tried and sentenced. If he had been guilty of rebellion he should have, as a native of Kingston, been tried

in that city by the civil law and accorded all the precaution and deliberation which that law affords. It also appears that the tribunal which sentenced Gordon to death was composed of young and consequently inexperienced men; that evidence was received which should not have been accepted; that though Gordon was an agitator, and therefore indirectly connected with the revolt, there was nothing to prove that he directly planned the late insurrection; and that he was hanged with the most indecent haste. Such a perversion of justice was not permitted to escape comment. By the greater portion of the Liberals, and by all the Dissenting interest, Eyre was most virulently abused, and all the vocabulary of detraction was exhausted by his opponents whenever his name and character came up for discussion. The steps taken by the governor to crush the revolt were warmly approved of by the colony; but the government at home, intimidated by the rage of the Dissenters, resolved to suspend Eyre until some inquiry had been made as to the character and extent of the outbreak.

Towards the close of the year Sir Henry Storks was sent out as temporary governor of Jamaica, and with him were despatched Mr. Russell Gurney, the recorder of London, and Mr. J. B. Maule, the recorder of Leeds, as commissioners to investigate into the recent disturbances. Let us anticipate a few months, and give the result of the inquiry. Briefly, it was as follows:—That the disturbances had their immediate origin in a planned resistance to lawful authority; that the causes of the insurgents rebelling were, (1) to obtain land free from the payment of rent, (2) the want of confidence generally felt by the labouring class in the tribunals before which most of the disputes affecting their interests were carried for adjudication, and (3) the wish to attain their ends by the death or expulsion of the white inhabitants of the island; *that such was the excitement of the island, that had the insurgents obtained more than a*

*momentary success, their ultimate overthrow would have been attended with a still more fearful loss of life and property; that praise was due to Governor Eyre, to whose skill, promptitude, and vigour the speedy termination of the rebellion was in a great degree to be attributed; that the military and naval operations were prompt and judicious; that by the continuance of martial law in its full force the people were deprived for longer than necessary of their constitutional privileges; that the punishments inflicted were excessive; the punishment of death unnecessarily frequent; the floggings reckless; and that the burning of 1000 houses was wanton and cruel.*

On the publication of this report the Liberals became the prey of the fiercest indignation, and resolved upon adopting vindictive measures. An association was formed to prosecute the ex-governor of Jamaica, who was now openly accused of the murder of Mr. Gordon. The Liberals were, however, not to have it all their own way; and the friends of the much-abused man now came forward, and an "Eyre defence fund" was started. Mr. Carlyle, in offering his name to be placed on the committee, thus spoke of the victim of Liberal fanaticism:—"All the light that has yet reached me on Mr. Eyre, and his history in the world, goes steadily to establish the conclusion that he is a *just, humane, and valiant man*, faithful to his trusts everywhere, and with no ordinary faculty for executing them; that his late services in Jamaica were of great, perhaps of incalculable value, as certainly they were of perilous and appalling difficulty. . . . Penalty and clamour are not the things the governor merits from any of us, but honour and thanks and wise imitation, should similar emergencies arise, on the great scale or on the small, in whatever we are governing. The English nation have never loved anarchy, nor was wont to spend its sympathy on miserable mad seditions, especially of this inhuman and half-brutish type, but always loved order

and the prompt suppression of seditious, and reserved its tears for something worthier than the promoters of such delirious and fatal enterprises, who had got their wages for their sad industry. . . . I do at once feel that, as a British citizen, I should and must make you welcome to my name for your committee, and to whatever good it can do you; with the hope only that many other British men, of far more significance in such a matter, will at once or gradually do the like; and that in fine, by wise effort and persistence, a blind and disgraceful act of public injustice may be prevented, and an egregious folly as well—not to say, for none can say or compute, what a vital detriment throughout the British empire in such an example set to all the colonies and governors the British empire has.”

This hope was realized. In spite of the rabid attacks on Mr. Eyre by Mr. Bright at Radical assemblies, and of the “bray” of the Baptists in Exeter Hall, the sound common sense of the English people declined to be led astray. The ex-governor of Jamaica, after much delay and agitation, was brought up before the Queen’s Bench; but the grand jury, after a long consultation, returned a verdict of No Bill. Nor were the proceedings against the agents of Mr. Eyre a whit more successful. The brigadier-general of Jamaica, and the president of the court-martial upon Gordon, were arrested and committed for trial on a charge of wilful murder. The lord chief-justice, in an exhaustive summing up, laid down the lines upon which the grand jury were to base their verdict. Mr. Eyre was “fully entitled and empowered to proclaim martial law.” Though the legality of Gordon’s arrest might be questionable, yet the tribunal which passed sentence upon him had not to deal with that matter; the only question for that tribunal was “whether, being in fact within the jurisdiction of martial law, Gordon was or was not liable to be tried.” Sir Alexander Cockburn then stated that though “the evidence on which

Gordon was convicted by the military tribunal was such that no civil judge in England could have held to be legally sufficient, yet if the military judges having, as they had, jurisdiction acted honestly and *bona fide* on the belief that this evidence proved the man’s guilt, that exonerated them.” The grand jury accepted this sensible interpretation of the case, and threw out the bill.

But attracting far more attention than either the cattle plague or the progress of the Jamaica revolt was an event which, long expected, now took place. Death had been busy during the last few years in the ranks of the political world, and its icy hand was now to close over and remove one of the most prominent men of the century. Lord Palmerston had for some time past been in feeble health. His eyesight was failing, he suffered from repeated attacks of the gout, and he had of late been forced to absent himself frequently from parliament. He had been a member of the House for nearly sixty years, but men were so accustomed to his presence in their midst that gradually they looked upon him as immortal, and could hardly bring themselves to consider a House of Commons without him. Ever since the Tiverton election, he had been compelled to regard himself as almost a prisoner. About the middle of October he caught a severe cold, and it was reported in town that he was sinking. He was spared the suffering of a lingering death. After an illness of four days he passed peacefully away. He was buried with all public honours in Westminster Abbey, and his death was widely and genuinely regretted. Whatever were his faults they were those which were easily pardoned by the nation, for they proceeded from the vigour and purity of his patriotism. His foreign policy, which had led to so many debates in Parliament, was only another proof of his love for England. Throughout his long and faithful service to the state his one object was to uphold English interests, to jealously

maintain the prestige of England, and on all necessary occasions to assert the authority and influence of England. It was this intense love of England which often caused him to interfere in foreign complications where such interference was uncalled for; it seemed to him almost like slighting his country for any foreign affairs to be settled without English advice and co-operation.

Of all our statesmen he was essentially the most English. His tastes, his prejudices, his ideas were all typical of the nation, of which he was the best representative of his day. To him England was the first and greatest country in the world; her men the bravest and most accomplished; her women the handsomest; her commerce the most prosperous; her resources the most fertile; her opulence the most marked. Among all classes he was popular. To the people he was not so much the experienced statesman, powerful in debate and the leader of cabinets, as he was a thorough English gentleman, a kind landlord, a good judge of horseflesh, fond of all manly sports, and the man who often gained his ends by a joke or a jaunty saying where the dull scholar and the heavy legislator would have failed. In parliament he was much regarded. His social position and knowledge of the world had their due effect; without being an orator he was an easy and practised speaker; his tact in managing men was exquisite; and his honour and good faith were never held in doubt. Able, genial, industrious, fond of what his class liked and hated what it disliked, he will be remembered on our list of premiers as he himself would have wished to be remembered—not as the greatest, but as the most English of our statesmen.

"It is impossible to deny," said Mr. Disraeli on the meeting of parliament, in allusion to the loss the country had sustained by the death of Lord Palmerston, "that the disappearance of such a character from the scene—of so much sagacity, of so much experience, and, I may

say, of so much fame—must in some degree, and for some time, derogate from the authority even of the House of Commons. But, sir, it is not on this occasion that I wish to refer to the character of a great statesman, but rather to the happy disposition of the man, which lent, indeed, a charm to the labours and anxieties of public life. By his good temper and good sense he facilitated the course of public business beyond what it is easy to ascertain, or even perhaps to imagine. I am sure it must be the general sentiment among us, that the influence over our debates will not soon cease of his genial experience and his moderating wisdom."

A few days later (February 22, 1866), on the occasion of the motion brought forward by Mr. Gladstone, that a monument be erected to the memory of Lord Palmerston in Westminster Abbey, Mr. Disraeli seconded the suggestion in a few well-chosen words. He hoped, he began, that the motion would have been seconded by some one who had had the honour of sharing the private friendship of Lord Palmerston, and at the same time had enjoyed his political confidence. Still, as no one had risen, he could not without great reluctance permit a proposal of such a character to pass in absolute silence, and let it appear as if the Conservative party did not assent to the motion with entire cordiality. "Whatever differences of opinion," he said, "there may be on political questions, the memory of sixty years of public service—always distinguished, sometimes illustrious—cannot be allowed to be cherished merely by an admiring or even a grateful country. It is under such circumstances most fitting and most proper that in the chief sanctuary of the realm there should be some outward and visible sign to preserve the memory of a statesman of whom it may be said that he combined in the highest degree two qualities which we seldom find united—energy and experience. I will not touch upon the personal qualities of the man. In this present Parliament I have already presumed to

speaking of them ; I will only say that they were most engaging. I trust that the time may never come when the love of fame shall cease to be the sovereign passion of our public men. But I still think that states-  
man is peculiarly to be envied who, when he leaves us, leaves not merely the memory of great achievements, but also the tender tradition of personal affection and social charm."

END OF VOL. I.

# THE EARL OF BEACONSFIELD, K.G., AND HIS TIMES.

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## CHAPTER I.

### THE TURNING OF THE TIDE.

ON the death of Lord Palmerston Earl Russell was placed at the head of affairs, and the leadership of the House of Commons was intrusted to Mr. Gladstone. With the exception of a few unimportant changes the cabinet remained unaltered; but though the members were the same, the policy of the administration was to be very different from what it had been in the past. By the removal of the late prime minister all Liberal opposition to the cause of reform had been silenced, and the new government entered upon office pledged to consider the questions of the extension of the franchise and the redistribution of seats. The parliament of 1866 was opened, much to the joy of the nation, by Her Majesty in person; this being the first appearance in public of the queen since her bereavement. For some days the Houses, as is the custom upon the assembling of a new parliament, were occupied with the swearing in of their members and other preliminary formalities. The speaker had also to be elected. The choice of the House of Commons fell for the third time upon Mr. Evelyn Denison, who, "from his thorough

knowledge of the orders and methods of parliament, his clearness and readiness in delivering opinions in matters of the greatest intricacy, and his impartiality in judging on all occasions," was specially qualified to fill the office, which required, according to Mr. Disraeli, "the courage of the English gentleman with the purity of the English judge." The selection was unanimously approved of, and from both sides of the House nothing was heard save praise at so happy an appointment.

"You have to-day, sir," said Mr. Disraeli (Feb. 1, 1866), "been re-elected to the chair for the third time. I have myself always been of opinion that re-election to the chair is, in fact, a greater distinction than the original choice. Political manœuvres and parliamentary passions may contrive to raise an individual to the elevated post you now occupy, but they cannot keep him there. For that result the possession of great and personal qualities is necessary—natural courtesy, adequate learning, firmness, and impartiality; and, above all, that inspiring sense of honour which is our surest guide in the



perplexities of public life, and which ever has been, and I trust ever will be, the characteristic of English gentlemen. It is because the House sees that you, sir, possess those qualities that you have been re-elected to the chair for the third time this day; and it is because we feel, on this side of the House, that you possess those qualities, that I am authorized on behalf of gentlemen here to offer you the tribute of our respect and congratulation."

These preliminaries settled, the formal opening of the proceedings of parliament took place. The speech from the throne was read by the lord-chancellor, and contained little with which the country was not already familiar. A marriage had been arranged between the Princess Helena and Prince Christian of Schleswig-Holstein. The death of the king of the Belgians, the uncle of Her Majesty, was an event to be deeply lamented. The relations of England with foreign powers were friendly and satisfactory. Allusion was then made to the renewal of diplomatic relations with Brazil, to the treaty of commerce with Austria, to the injuries inflicted on American commerce by cruisers under the Confederate flag, to the Jamaica insurrection, to the disaffection in Ireland, and to the progress of the cattle plague. Measures were promised on the subject of capital punishment; the bankruptcy and other laws were to be amended and consolidated; and the oaths taken by members of parliament were to be altered, with a view to getting rid of unnecessary declarations and of invidious distinctions between members of different religious communities. Respecting the question of parliamentary reform it was said:—"I have directed that information should be procured in reference to the right of voting in the election of members to serve in parliament for counties, cities, and boroughs. When that information is complete the attention of parliament will be called to the result thus obtained, with a view to such improvements in the laws which regulate the right of voting in

the election of members of the House of Commons as may tend to strengthen our free institutions and conduce to the public welfare."

The address was agreed to without a division in the House of Lords. In the Commons The O'Donoghue endeavoured to insert a paragraph calling upon ministers to examine into and remove the disaffection in Ireland, but the suggestion was defeated on a division by 346 to 25 votes.

The first subject which attracted the attention of the legislature was the cattle plague. The disease was now carrying off some seven thousand animals a week, and it was feared that not only would the food supply of the nation be seriously interfered with, but that, unless immediate steps were at once taken to check the spread of the infection, it would in the future be almost impossible to stamp it out. Accordingly, a few days after the assembling of parliament, Sir George Grey moved for leave to bring in a bill to amend the laws relating to infectious diseases in cattle. All means of cure, he said, had failed, and the time had now arrived for prompt action on the part of the government. He proposed that all infected animals should be slaughtered, that strict regulations should control the movement of live cattle by railway and road, and that compensation should be granted to the owners of the slaughtered cattle out of funds locally raised and locally distributed. The bill met with much criticism. Mr. Ward Hunt, an experienced practical agriculturist, did not consider the safeguards proposed as sufficient. Mr. Bright opposed the principle of compensation. With compensation he believed that the slaughter would be unnecessary and monstrous in amount. It was also contrary to the principle adopted by parliament on past occasions of public suffering, to vote money out of taxes to remedy a misfortune of that kind; it was a grievance, he declared, which every tax-payer would complain of if his money were applied to the compensation of well-to-do

farmers and rich landowners who might suffer from the infliction.

Mr. Disraeli was in favour of the bill. He supported the principle of compensation, and differed wholly from the view taken upon the subject by Mr. Bright. "Now I hope it will be understood," he said (February 15, 1866), "that I uphold the principle of compensation, not merely as a matter of justice to those whose property is destroyed by order of the local authority, but also as a matter of public prudence, and for the general advantage of the country. I confess that, unless I believed it to be necessary for the general advantage, I should not support the principle of compensation. I admit that those who suffer under visitations like that we are endeavouring to mitigate, ought to receive some assistance extra from that which they may acquire by their own exertions. But I must also admit that public subscriptions are the natural resource to appeal to under ordinary circumstances; and if all we had to consider were the losses of the farmers, it would be, I think, a legitimate question to discuss whether their losses should not be supplied by their own exertions, and by private sympathy and charity. But a great principle is here involved. I believe that by admitting the principle of compensation you are indirectly preventing the spread of the calamity which we are now endeavouring to eradicate. It is on that ground I support the provisions of this bill." This view was undoubtedly based on just grounds. The farmer or squire was not to be compensated because he had lost his cattle from disease, but because he had lost his cattle by complying with the orders of the government, which directed that property should be destroyed for the public good. Under such circumstances it was only fair that compensation should be tendered for the loss of valuable animals, which might perhaps have been saved had their owners been permitted to have recourse to the remedies that were then so freely being suggested. In spite,

however, of all the precautions of the government it was some months before the disease was stamped out.

The condition of Ireland was now a subject of grave anxiety to the authorities. Fenian disaffection was again busy in the towns and counties of the emerald isle, tempting the population to regain their ends by open revolt. Arms and money were secretly sent across the Atlantic from America, to help the Irish in their attempts at resistance. Depots and manufactures of arms were established all over the island to furnish the rebels with guns and ammunition, when the fitting moment arrived for the rising. Agents were wandering over the country engaged in enlisting the peasantry to form themselves into a body to attack the government. Efforts had been made by the Fenians to tamper with the loyalty of the troops quartered in the island, and it was feared not without some success. The disaffection increased so rapidly in the counties of Cork, Tipperary, Waterford, and Dublin that the lord-lieutenant was compelled to recommend the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act. "The state of affairs," he wrote to the government, "is very serious. The conspirators, undeterred by the punishment of so many of their leaders, are actively organizing an outbreak to destroy the queen's authority. Sir Hugh Rose details the various plans they have in contemplation, and he draws no exaggerated picture. There are scattered over the country a number of agents who are swearing-in members, and who are prepared to take the command when the moment arrives. These men are of the most dangerous class. They are Irishmen imbued with American notions, and possessed of considerable military experience. There are 340 such men known to the police in the provinces, and about 160 in Dublin. There are several hundred men who have come over from England and Scotland, who receive 1s. 6d. a day, and are waiting for the time of action. Any one may observe these men loitering about at the corners of

the streets. As to arms, we have found no less than three regular manufactories of pikes, bullets, and cartridges in Dublin. . . . The most dangerous feature of the present movement is the attempt to seduce the troops. . . . I have watched every symptom here for many months, and it is my deliberate conviction that no time should now be lost in suspending the Act. I cannot be responsible for the safety of the country, if power is not forthwith given to the government to seize the leaders."

Thus advised, the cabinet resolved not to turn a deaf ear to the suggestion. Sir George Grey introduced a bill to suspend for a limited period the Habeas Corpus Act in Ireland, and an important debate followed upon the proposal. The bill was to give power to the lord-lieutenant to detain in custody any suspected person whom he might have already arrested, and with the concurrence of six members of the privy council in Ireland to arrest any other persons thought to be suspicious characters, between the February of 1866 and the March of 1867, and detain them up to that time without the prisoners having recourse to any legal remedy. The measure was approved of by Mr. Disraeli in a somewhat critical speech. He had listened, he said (February 17, 1866), with much concern to the suggestions before the House. For a government to come forward to suspend the most precious constitutional right of the people was an act which required on their part the greatest courage; and if a parliament conceded such a measure it was obvious that it must be done with the utmost reluctance. He therefore could not blame ministers because they had hesitated in coming forward to make that proposition. But he blamed their delay, their want of prescience and energy on former occasions. He condemned the conduct of the government in having repealed last session an Act\* passed in the reign of George

\* 50 George III.—"An Act for more effectually preventing the administering and taking of unlawful oaths in Ireland, and for the protection of magistrates and witnesses in criminal cases."

the Third, which empowered the government of Ireland "to arrest all vagrant strangers who had no ostensible home, who could give no satisfactory account of themselves, and could allege no legitimate occupation." Had that Act not been repealed much of the danger and injury to which Ireland had already been subjected might have been prevented, without infringing upon the rights of orderly and loyal men. It was, however, no use lamenting what might have been done; they were to consider how they should now act. In the present disaffection in Ireland he saw an attempt upon the majesty of England. It was not directed against the predominance of party, or against the authority of any particular institution or establishment, but it aimed at the throne of England and at the greatness of the empire.

"Under these circumstances," said Mr. Disraeli, with that freedom from factious opposition which always characterized his policy when facing the Treasury bench, "under these circumstances, I cannot hesitate to give a complete support to the proposition of the government. Whether the preceding policy of the government did encourage such a state of affairs as now exists in Ireland is a legitimate subject for future parliamentary question and investigation; but all that the House has to consider now is whether the statement of the present condition of Ireland made by the secretary of state is a correct one. Who can doubt it? Who can doubt these facts, which are known in their general character to all of us? Her Majesty's government asks us to legislate upon events and circumstances of which we ourselves are the competent judges. They do not come here as in old days with a conspiracy in a green bag, to startle the country by sudden revelations into violent courses. They have given us a statement of the condition of a portion of Her Majesty's dominions, of which we from our own experience are competent judges. I do not for one moment question the authenticity of the statement

made by the secretary of state, and I cannot for a moment hesitate as to the course I shall pursue with regard to it. But if the House consent—as I hope it will, and consent unanimously—to this proposition; if we are prepared to give the ministry, with respect to this and to all arrangements connected with this subject, a unanimous and unwavering support, I would impress also upon the House the immense importance of the utmost promptitude of action. It is not merely that promptitude of action may prevent immediate and future calamity and mischief, but if parliament be unanimous in supporting Her Majesty's ministers in this proposition, and prompt in carrying the measure into effect, there is a proportionately better chance of diminishing the period during which this exceptional state of affairs is to continue. It is therefore in the interest of the liberty of Ireland itself, it is in favour of its freedom and the continuance of its privileges, that I say it is our duty and our policy if we consent, as I doubt not we shall consent, to the measure of the government, that we should support those regulations by which the passage of this measure shall be carried without a moment's delay. I trust that the House will, by its cordial and unanimous support of the government, show to Europe that we are resolved to maintain the majesty of the crown of England, and that the people of this country—prepared as they are on all occasions to legislate for their fellow-subjects in Ireland in a spirit of conciliation and of justice—are resolved that no foreign conspiracy shall deprive Her Majesty of one of the most valuable portions of her dominions.”

On a division leave was given to introduce the bill by 364 to 6 votes, and the measure subsequently passed through all its stages without further discussion. It was then immediately sent up to the House of Lords, where its progress through the chamber was equally rapid. It has been said that no statute was ever passed with so much celerity as this, the first Act of

the new parliament. The power it extended to the authorities in Ireland was of much service, but still throughout the year Irish sedition was a troublesome thorn in the side of England.

The question of the oaths taken by members of parliament next attracted attention. During the preceding session it had been complained of by the Roman Catholics that there were clauses in the oath to which papists strongly objected, and a measure had been introduced for assimilating the oath to be taken by the members of all religious communions without distinction; this measure had passed the Commons, but had been thrown out by the Upper House. Prompted by the Catholic interest, the government now resolved to bring in a bill which would redress all the grievances complained of. The task was intrusted to Sir George Grey. The time had arrived, he said, when one general oath should be sworn to by all members of parliament indifferently. It was now no longer necessary, he thought, to maintain the portion of the oath relating to abjuration or supremacy or the maintenance of the established church, as the existing law was quite strong enough for the purpose. He therefore proposed that the present oath should be repealed, and the following form substituted:—"I, A B, do swear that I will faithfully bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Victoria, and defend her to the best of my power against all conspiracies whatever which may be made against her power, crown, or dignity."

This exchange was critically examined by Mr. Disraeli (March 8, 1866). He admitted that in the precise form in which the Roman Catholic oath then stood there was something obsolete and invidious, yet no one had pretended for a moment that the oath constituted anything like a practical grievance. It was always unwise to disturb oaths of a political and parliamentary character, unless there was some urgent necessity to do so. In an ancient and historic country it was impossible that

oaths should not possess some reference to the past, and even some looking forward to the future. If England were a new community establishing herself in the backwoods, she could construct an oath, no doubt, of what might be called abstract application. But they could not act on mere theoretical principles in a complex society and in an ancient country famous for its history like England; and therefore, when no practical grievance arose, a measure should not be interfered with. Nor was he in favour of omitting the clause which compelled the Roman Catholic to swear that he would do no hurt to the established church. "For my own part," said Mr. Disraeli, "I have ever been of opinion that the established church of this country does not depend upon oaths. I think the Church of England in all its branches is too strong, too deeply rooted in the affections of the people and traditions of the country, to depend for its maintenance upon any form of words of that character. I have never raised the cry of 'the church in danger' which has sometimes been imputed to me by gentlemen opposite, without, I think, due reflection. I have often thought that if a severance took place between church and state, the state would be in danger; but I never thought the church would be in danger. I think it is of great importance that the state should be religious. I think it may be doubted whether it is of advantage to the church that the church should be political. But I have ever been of opinion that by severing the union between the church and the state you would lower the sanctions of public conduct in this country, and would gradually but certainly reduce government to be a mere affair of police."

He was not opposed, he continued, to the construction of a uniform oath to be taken by all members of the House. But to frame such an oath was no easy task. To construct an oath which should neither offend the consciences of Roman Catholics nor omit anything which Protestants deemed

important was a matter of much difficulty. Nor did he think the solution now arrived at by the government was satisfactory. He objected to a merely bald declaration of loyalty to the present sovereign. An oath of allegiance should be dynastic. The great object of an oath of allegiance was to preserve from anarchy and to secure order; therefore the oath should not merely include the queen, but "her heirs and successors as limited by the Act of Settlement." He also objected that in the oath framed by the government no reference was made to the supremacy of the crown. The meaning of the words supremacy of the crown signified that the majesty of the law of England should be recognized—that in all the courts established by law the law of the queen should be supreme. He considered this a grave omission. Still he would not oppose the measure, because he was anxious that a uniform oath should be constructed. If the two points he suggested were included in the bill he believed the difficulty would be solved, and an oath drawn up which both Protestant and Papist would not object to swear to. These recommendations were accepted, and the bill, after a little discussion in the Upper House, became law.

Mr. Disraeli was, however, to reserve the keenness of his criticism and the power of his eloquence for the one great measure of the session. After the pledges given both by the prime minister and the chancellor of the exchequer, it was impossible that the question of reform could any longer be deferred. Mr. Bright had been active during the winter in stimulating the passions of the country, so that the subject should not die out and be quietly shelved as heretofore. There can be little doubt, however, that if ministers had been permitted the alternative, they would have preferred to delay for a season any measure dealing with so vexed a matter as parliamentary representation. The House had been newly elected; members had spent vast sums for the privilege of being seated on the green

benches of the popular chamber, and such individuals were certainly not anxious to advocate a bill the effect of which might soon compel them to have recourse to the expenditure from which they had just escaped, with heavy debts and diminished balances at their bankers'. Still the government felt that the question which had been so long tampered with, then deferred, and then dropped altogether, could no longer be postponed and must resolutely be taken in hand. Severe opposition was to be expected, but it was hoped that the Liberal majority would be strong enough to defeat all party manoeuvres, and eventually enrol the new scheme upon the statute-book.

Accordingly (March 12, 1866) Mr. Gladstone, before a House crowded in every part, rose to ask leave to bring in a bill for the better representation of the people. The bill was a compromise between the extreme radical and the more conservative projects of the Liberal party, and like most compromises it failed to satisfy either section. It was too mild and moderate for the Radicals, and yet it was too destructive for the Liberals represented by Mr. Lowe and Mr. Horsman. At the close of his speech Mr. Gladstone thus summed up the provisions of the measure which the government proposed to introduce. "The first is," he said, "to create an occupation franchise in counties, for houses alone, or houses with land, beginning at £14 rental, and reaching up to the present occupation franchise of £50. The second is, to introduce into counties the provision that copyholders and leaseholders within parliamentary boroughs shall be put upon the same footing as freeholders in parliamentary boroughs now stand upon for the purpose of county voting, without any alteration in the relative amounts of qualification for household and copyhold as compared with freehold. The third is a savings-bank franchise, which will operate in both counties and towns, but which may, we think, have the more sensible operation in the counties. In towns we propose, first, to place compound householders on

the same footing as ratepaying householders. We propose to abolish tax and rate paying clauses; we propose to reduce the £10 clear annual value to a £7 clear annual value; and to bring in the gross estimated rental taken from the rate-book as the measure of the value, thus, *pro tanto*, making the rate-book the register. We propose, also, to introduce a franchise on behalf of lodgers, which will comprehend both those persons holding part of a house with separate and independent access, and those who hold part of a house as inmates of the family of another person. The qualification for the suffrage in these classes will be the £10 clear annual value of apartments, without reference to furniture."

In the debate that ensued, which extended over several nights, all the parliamentary ability of the House was enlisted. It was on this occasion that Mr. Lowe, not unmindful of the manner in which the Liberals had behaved to him when under the harrow of Lord Robert Cecil, opposed the reform bill of the government in a series of speeches which for close reasoning, brilliant diction, and mordant invective are among the finest specimens of oratory of this century. Witty and eloquent as were the speeches of Mr. Disraeli, it must be confessed that during the reform debate it was Mr. Lowe who was the most brilliant and the most formidable antagonist of the government. What Mr. Disraeli was in 1845 to the cause of free trade, so Mr. Lowe was in 1866 to the cause of reform. In all his attacks upon the bill, and in all his strictures against the venality and ignorance of the working classes,\* Mr. Lowe was warmly

\* "You have had the opportunity of knowing some of the constituencies of this country, and I ask, if you want venality, ignorance, drunkenness, and the means of intimidation—if you want impulsive, unreflecting, and violent people, where will you go to look for them—to the top or to the bottom? It is ridiculous to blink the fact that, since the Reform Act, great competition has prevailed amongst the voters of between £20 and £10 rental—the £10 lodging and beerhouse keepers. . . . We know what sort of persons live in these small houses; we have all had experience of them under the name of 'freemen,' and it would be a good thing if they were disfranchised altogether."—*Mr. Lowe, March 13, 1866.*

supported by Mr. Horsman; indeed it was the "superior person" who was the first to exhibit, in no latent fashion, his hostility to the government measure. It was owing to this opposition that Mr. Bright passed upon the twin deserters from the Liberal cause a criticism which has since become historical.

"The right honourable gentleman" [Mr. Horsman], he said, "is the first of the new party who has expressed his great grief, who has retired into what may be called his political cave of Adullam, and he has called about him every one that was in distress and every one that was discontented. The right honourable gentleman has been long anxious to form a party in this House. There is scarcely any one on this side of the House who is able to address the House with effect, or to take much part in our debates, whom he has not tried to bring over to his party or cabal; and at last the right honourable gentleman has succeeded in hooking the right honourable gentleman the member for Calne. I know there was an opinion expressed many years ago by a member of the Treasury bench and of the cabinet, that two men would make a party. When a party is formed of two men so amiable, so discreet, as the two right honourable gentlemen, we may hope to see, for the first time in parliament, a party perfectly harmonious and distinguished by mutual and unbroken trust. But there is one difficulty which it is impossible to remove. This party of two reminds me of the Scotch terrier, which was so covered with hair that you could not tell which was the head and which was the tail of it."\*

At a meeting held by the Conservative party it was unanimously resolved to oppose the reform bill; and the hands of the

\* Mr. Lowe was, however, not to be attacked with impunity, and he speedily retorted upon Mr. Bright. "Demagogues," he said, "are the commonplaces of history; they are found everywhere where there is found popular commotion. They have all a family likeness. Their names float lightly on the stream of time; they finally contrive to be handed down somehow, but they are as little to be regarded for themselves as the foam which rides on the top of the stormy wave, and bespatters the rock it cannot shake."

Conservatives were considerably strengthened by an amendment proposed by Earl Grosvenor, who had hitherto been regarded as a staunch adherent of the administration, and whose opposition plainly showed that the Whig element in the Liberal party were far from satisfied with the government measure. The amendment was as follows:—"That this House, while ready to consider, with a view to its settlement, the question of parliamentary reform, is of opinion that it is inexpedient to discuss a bill for the reduction of the franchise in England and Wales until the House has before it the entire scheme contemplated by government for the amendment of the representation of the people."

This amendment altered the current of the debate. Mr. Gladstone declared that he would not only resist the amendment, but would treat it as a vote of want of confidence. Both sides put forth all their strength in attacking and defending the clauses of the reform bill, and from the evidently divided state of the Liberal party the Conservatives, aided by the venomous eloquence of Mr. Lowe and the jealousy of the Palmerstonian Whigs to the measure, did not despair of victory. On the eighth night of the debate (April 27, 1866) Mr. Disraeli rose to attack the bill, and in a speech which lasted nearly three hours lucidly laid before the House his objections to the government scheme, the views of his party upon the subject, and the reasons which led him to give his vote in favour of the amendment. He briefly alluded to the previous measures of parliamentary reform, and denied that the present parliament was especially pledged to introduce a bill to amend the representation of the people; indeed if ever there was one less pledged it was the present parliament. What then, he asked, was the origin of this £7 franchise bill? "The origin of it is this," he answered, "that some eighteen or nineteen months ago the chancellor of the exchequer came down to the House one fine summer morning appro-

priated to one of those dreary debates on the £6 franchise, to which we all look back with a feeling of horror—made a most remarkable speech, in which he established the franchise on the rights of man, and at the same time announced his conviction that the working classes of the country, on whom he delivered a high panegyric, possessed no share, or only an infinitesimal share, of that franchise; the inevitable consequence being that a large measure should be brought forward, as an approximation to the rights of man, to confer the suffrage on the working classes. That speech was received with enthusiasm by a party in this House—not a numerous party, but represented by great talent—in one individual by commanding talent—while among his followers are men of activity.”

His great objection to the bill, continued Mr. Disraeli, was that he could not understand it, he could not calculate its consequences or fathom what might be the effect of its provisions, unless he had before him the further measures that had been promised. If the bill passed it would lead to such confusion, that if it became the duty of ministers to advise a dissolution of parliament, they would have to hold an autumn session for the purpose of revising and modifying the bill before they could dissolve. If passed alone, it would not only perpetuate the existing anomalies in the county representation, but would augment them. He was perfectly willing to consider the question of extending the county franchise. He had never been a stickler for a contracted or exclusive county franchise; but then it must be a county franchise—a suffrage exercised by those who had a natural relation to the property and industry of the county, and who would be not strangers, but members of the local community. If the changes proposed were made before the boundaries of boroughs were settled, the whole representation of some counties would be thrown into the hands of the working-class electors who lived outside the present borough bound-

aries—as at Rochdale, Birmingham, Halifax, and elsewhere—but who were essentially a part of the borough constituency. Again, if no allotment bill were brought in, a great difference would be made to the county representation by the sudden conversion into county voters of the populations of a large number of manufacturing towns, which had no borough members and which had sprung into importance since 1832.

“Now, I ask again,” inquired Mr Disraeli, “is this a state of affairs which ought to be permitted? If you pass this bill with all these anomalies left unremedied what, I ask, will be the condition of the county constituencies? I take it for granted—there may be individuals in this House who think otherwise, but I will not dwell upon such eccentric opinions—I take it for granted that the great body of the members of the House of Commons wish to maintain the legitimate influence of the landed interest of England, as being one of the best securities certainly for public liberty, and the only security for our local government. I take it for granted, I say, that is the feeling of both sides of the House. Why, then, should you make these great changes, and make them in this imperfect manner, instead of having before you, as this amendment asks you to have, a complete scheme? . . .

I will ask the House for a moment to consider what will be the effect upon the county constituencies of the admission into them of the population of those boroughs which are not parliamentary boroughs. This is the next step in considering the effect of this bill upon the county constituencies. The House knows very well that, in almost every county in England, there are towns whose population exceeds 5000 which are not represented. Many of these are rural towns, and have a keen interest in the property and industry of the counties in which they are situate; and the admission of the population of these towns into the county constituencies would not make much difference, as they would have a community of



interest and of feeling with the counties, and would doubtless vote for those men who would best represent the interests of the county. But in cases where large towns have sprung into sudden population in consequence of some particular and distinctive industry, what would be the effect of permitting the population of such towns suddenly to exercise the franchise of the county, in which they have only a limited interest? Why, such a change must of necessity lead to great inconvenience and injustice, and must sensibly operate in reducing the legitimate power—for we ask no more—of the landed interest.

"In the bill of 1859, referred to by the hon. member for Birmingham the other night, there was an allotment of seats of which he spoke with some contempt, although he was obliged to admit that it was of such a character that there was not a single unrepresented town of 20,000 inhabitants, and scarcely one of 15,000, not provided for, and that the effect of admitting the population of the unrepresented towns into the county franchise was proportionately relieved. As to the effect of the unrepresented towns, by the reduction of the franchise, on the county constituencies the answer of government now, no doubt, will be, 'Wait until you see our bill for the redistribution of seats.' My first and principal reply to that would be, 'If we consent to the second reading of this bill to-night, what security have we that the subsequent measures which the amendment calls for, and which we all know to be absolutely necessary for the proper understanding of this bill, will be passed?' No speech that we have heard has met this argument. . . . Well, then, under these circumstances, I address to the government these questions—What are you going to do for the counties? You are going to increase the representation of the boroughs, and are going, we will say, to transfer the representation of some of the small boroughs to larger boroughs, and thus so far to relieve the county constituencies from the possible danger of being to a great

extent absorbed by the population of these towns; but at the same time what are you going to do for the counties? Are you, in the first instance, going to add some members to the counties as well as to the large towns? Or are you going to add a great many members to counties and some to large towns? On what principle are you going to act? Are you going to establish plurality of representation while you shrink from granting plurality of voting to the constituent body? Are members to come here to represent numbers and not opinions? I ask these questions because upon your determination respecting them our decision with reference to the amount of the county franchise entirely depends. Or have you found, as others have found before you, and as I have no doubt Lord Russell in the course of his numerous studies and experiments has discovered, that this would be a plan extremely inconvenient, if not impossible? It would not faithfully represent the country. Would you, therefore, have recourse to a system of further division of counties, and perhaps of the great boroughs and cities? We want your decision on these points, because upon your determination depends the judgment we can arrive at as to the amount of the county franchise. . . .

"Now, I have not the slightest doubt to what all these fine measures would lead. I have never believed that they would end in the destruction of the country. I have too much confidence in the country for that. I think there are sense and creative spirit enough in this country to form a government. But what I think is that they will end in the destruction of Parliament. You may get rid of the House of Commons—I hope you will not destroy England. Now, suppose the present government make up their minds—as for aught I know they have made up their minds to do—to meet the question on a great scale, and astonish the House with a great scheme founded on their own statistics. Suppose they say, 'We are prepared to disfranchise eighty-seven boroughs which have not 500 electors. We

cannot give them entirely to the land; it is not practicable. But we will endeavour to approach a fair balance in the constitution, and will as far as possible represent population and property blended, and at the same time we will every now and then allot for representation some distinctive interest.' Suppose they do that, what would be the consequence? If the House will permit me, I will tell them.

"This will probably occur first. I do not suppose you would have, as some think, a parliament which would not have the confidence of the country. If you had electoral districts to-morrow you would have a very great parliament, for the character of individuals and the representation of great interests command public respect in England. You would have every great landowner in this House, every great manufacturer, and some merchants. But in a short time you would find that you did not have that hold over the executive which you had under the old system. The want of diversity of elements in this House would cause that. In proportion as your command over the executive fades, your great proprietors and your great manufacturers will cease to care to belong to the House of which the influence and importance proportionately diminish. Then the story will be, that the House of Commons is not what it was. So you will extend the franchise again, and you may go to manhood or universal suffrage, but you will not advance your case. You will have a parliament then that will entirely lose its command over the executive, and so it will meet with less consideration and possess less influence; because *the moment you have universal suffrage it always happens that the man who elects despises the elected. He says, 'I am as good as he is, and although I sent him to parliament, I have not a better opinion of him than I have of myself.'* Then when the House of Commons is entirely without command over the executive, it will fall into the case of those continental popular assemblies which we have seen rise

up and disappear in our own days. There will be no charm of tradition; no prescriptive spell; no families of historic lineage; none of those great estates round which men rally when liberty is assailed; no statesmanship, no eloquence, no learning, no genius. Instead of these, you will have a horde of selfish and obscure mediocrities, incapable of anything but mischief, and that mischief devised and regulated by the raging demagogue of the hour!"

Mr. Disraeli then touched upon the reduction of the borough franchise, and the wish of the government to introduce the working classes to their fair share in the constituent body. It was not a question whether they were afraid of the working man, but whether they could improve the English constitution. "Now, I hold the English constitution," he said, "not to be a phrase, but to be a fact. I hold it to be a polity founded on distinct principles, and aiming at definite ends. I hold our constitution to be a monarchy, limited by the co-ordinate authority of bodies of the subjects which are invested with privileges and with duties for their own defence and for the common good—the so-called estates of the realm. One of these estates of the realm is the estate of the Commons, of which we are the representatives. Now, of course, the elements of the Commons vary, and must be modified according to the vicissitudes and circumstances of a country like England. Nevertheless, the original scheme of the Plantagenets may always guide us. The Commons consisted of the proprietors of the land after the barons, the citizens and burgesses, and the skilled artisans. Well, these are elements I wish to see in them, which I wish to preserve, and, if necessary, to increase; but I wish also to retain the original character of the constitution. I wish to legislate in the spirit of our constitution, not departing from the genius of the original scheme. *The elements of the estate of the Commons must be numerous, and they must be ample in an age like this, but they must be choice. Our constituent*

over

*body should be numerous enough to be independent, and select enough to be responsible.*

We, who are the representatives of the Commons, do not represent an indiscriminate multitude, but a body of men endowed with privileges which they enjoy, but also intrusted with duties which they must perform."

The Conservative party, he asserted, did not wish to exclude the working classes. They desired that the choicest members of the working classes should form a part of the estate of the Commons; but they recoiled from a gross and indiscriminate reduction of the franchise. "The question is, said Mr. Disraeli, "have the working classes or have they not a fair proportion of that estate of the Commons of which they are entitled to be members? I do not say they have. I say that you should inquire—that you should pause—that you should obtain sufficient information, before you make a change; but, above all, that you should act in the spirit of the English constitution. I think that this House should remain a House of Commons, and not become a House of the People, the House of a mere indiscriminate multitude, devoid of any definite character, and not responsible to society, and having no duties and no privileges under the constitution. Are we to consider this subject in the spirit of the English constitution, or are we to meet it in the spirit of the American constitution? I prefer to consider the question in the spirit of our own constitution. In what I say I do not intend to undervalue American institutions; quite the reverse. I approve of American institutions, for they are adapted to the country in which they exist. The point I would always consider is, whether the institutions of a country are adapted to the country where they are established. But I say none of the conditions exist in England which exist in America, and make those institutions flourish so eminently there. If I see a great body of educated men in possession of a

vast expanse of cultivated land, and behind them an illimitable region where the landless may become landowners, then I should recognize a race to whom might be intrusted the responsibility of sovereign power. The blot of the American political system is not essential to it, but accidental; it is those turbulent and demoralized mobs which exist in the cities of the sea coast which constitute so great a reproach to American institutions. If, however, you introduce those institutions into England I believe the effect would be disastrous. You would not gain that which is excellent in the American system, but that which is not an essential quality, though a most disgraceful and demoralizing accident. You would have the rule of mobs in great towns, and the sway of turbulent multitudes. And if a dominant multitude were to succeed in bringing the land of England into the condition of the land in America, they would after all get but a limited area, and that only after a long struggle, in the course of which the great elements of our civilization would disappear, and England, from being a first-rate kingdom, would become a third-rate republic."

Then in tones of haughty reproof he passed on to criticise the remarkable epistle of the member for Birmingham. During the Easter recess, Mr. Bright, with that gross abuse which so often characterizes his virulent partisanship, had penned a singular epistle to a meeting held at Birmingham to consider the terms of the reform bill. "Parliament," he wrote, "is never hearty for reform or for any good measure. It hated the bill which repealed the corn law in 1846. It does not like the franchise bill now upon its table. It is to a large extent the offspring of landlord power in the counties, and of tumult and corruption in the burghs; and it would be strange if such a parliament were in favour of freedom and of an honest representation of the people. But notwithstanding such a parliament, this bill will pass if Birmingham and other towns will do their duty. There is

opposed to it the Tory party, of whose blindness and folly we have abundant proofs in all its history. We have no reason now to expect from it a wiser course; and we have a small section of men who do not accept the name of Tory, but zealously do its work. These combine to form a conspiracy on which all the hopes of Mr. Disraeli and the Opposition are based. I think a more dirty conspiracy has not been seen in the House of Commons during many generations. What should be done and what must be done under these circumstances? You know what our fathers did thirty-four years ago, and you know the result. The men who in every speech they utter insult the working men, describing them as a multitude given up to ignorance and vice, will be the first to yield when the popular will is loudly and resolutely expressed. If Parliament Street from Charing Cross to the venerable Abbey were filled with men seeking a reform bill, as it was two years ago with men come to do honour to an illustrious Italian, these slanderers of their countrymen would learn to be civil if they did not learn to love freedom." Perhaps there are others besides "these slanderers of their countrymen" who require to be educated as to the advantages of civility. Demagogues who pose as the parasites of the working classes are always very sensitive when the lower orders are abused; yet where the higher classes are concerned, detraction and offensive imputations, it would seem, are, in the estimation of these mob orators, but the legitimate expressions of political vocabulary.

This vulgar document, every line of which cast a reflection upon the assembly to his connection with which Mr. Bright owed whatever of fame or notoriety he possessed, was now to be commented on by Mr. Disraeli. "Some of my friends," he said, "have spoken with indignation of the manifesto which the member for Birmingham" (mark the studied omission of the "honourable") "has thought fit to publish. My feeling when I read

that letter was not a feeling of indignation, nor was it one of contempt—nothing of the kind; it was a feeling of mortification; I felt I had totally misunderstood the character of the individual with whom we had been so long in communication, which I thought was at least dignified. I thought, for example, that the member for Birmingham was proud of being a member of the House of Commons, and I confess I saw with satisfaction that the House of Commons sometimes seemed not disinclined to be proud of him. But that he should leave us only to hold us up to public obloquy was to me a cause, not of indignation, but of disappointment; that he should speak of us in a manner utterly deficient in feeling and candour, wanting alike in truth and taste, was—I speak it unfeignedly—most painful. He was the last man, knowing what I know of him, in this House, that I should have supposed would hold up the House of Commons to public reprobation, almost with the truculence of a Danton."

Then Mr. Disraeli criticised the reckless charges brought forward by Mr. Bright. The member for Birmingham had declared that the Conservatives were always anxious to plunge the country into war in order to divert the people from civil progress, and that all "the abject misery and wretchedness which the people of England have endured" were due to the action of the Tory party. "What war," asked Mr. Disraeli, "had his followers plunged the country into? Was it the Crimean war? Were the Tories the authors of that? Why, did not Mr. Cobden himself declare solemnly to the House that if Lord Derby's government had not been turned out of office in 1852 the Crimean war would never have happened? Had not the Tory party employed every fair means to prevent the Italian war? And could not the same answer be returned as to the war between Denmark and Germany, and the war between the North and the South in America? It was the Tory party who had frankly and manfully endeavoured to prevent such wars; but it was the

Liberals, by their meddlesome interference, and by their promises of help held out and then repudiated, who had encouraged resistance, and had caused nations to drift into hostilities.

"But, sir," continued Mr. Disraeli, "the hon. gentleman is not content with imputing to us an anxiety to involve the country in external calamities; he says the Tory party have been the cause of all the abject misery and wretchedness which the people of England have endured. Now, I will take the last thirty years—they have been dinned into our ears often enough at these Liverpool banquets\*—and I ask any man, whether he sits on this or that side of the House, what has been the conduct of the Tory party in this respect? During the last thirty years there have been twenty-eight measures introduced into this House, the object of which has been to ameliorate the condition of the people—to reduce their hours of labour, to secure for them the payment of their wages in coin of the realm, to save them from torture and oppression in the mine and in the colliery, to extend to all engaged in their ingenious arts, in the bleaching-ground, in the printing works, the benefits of that successful amelioration which had been introduced into the cotton and woollen factories. All these measures were passed with immense difficulty. Never was an opposition exercised stronger, more resolute, more pitiless, than that which was organized against these measures. But they passed. And who passed them? *Not one of those measures but was proposed by a gentleman sitting upon these benches. Not one of those measures was passed but by the united energies of the Tory party.* And who opposed them? The Liberal government of that day generally opposed them; but they were opposed mainly and chiefly by the influence of one individual, who offered, as he does on all occasions when he opposes anything, an opposition that is

formidable because it is able—who threw all his energy and eloquence into the resistance to those claims, and who for a time retarded their advancement; but, notwithstanding his power of organization—notwithstanding his energy and eloquence—he was ultimately defeated, and that was *the member for Birmingham!*"

Mr. Disraeli concluded by stating that he should vote for the amendment moved by Lord Grosvenor. He could not approve of the present reform bill. The principles upon which parliament ought to proceed with this question of reform should be English, and not American—upon the principle that their assembly was the House of Commons, and not the House of the People, and that it represented a great political order, and not an indiscriminate multitude. They should weigh votes instead of counting them. They should not build up the constituent body on the rights of man; they should not intrust the destiny of the country to the judgment of a numerical majority. And it was because he wished to avert from this country such calamities and disasters that he opposed the bill.

The scene that ensued upon the division was one of the most exciting that the House of Commons has ever witnessed. It was impossible to decide from the deafening shouts that arose from the "ayes" and the "noes," when the speaker put the question, which party was to be victorious. As the division proceeded the verdict was anticipated by eager members. Mr. Walpole passed along the front Opposition bench, and whispered to Mr. Disraeli that the ministerial majority was six. The result was, however, soon known. The "noes" had been "told," and the numbers "313" were murmured throughout the House as the strength of the Opposition. Such a collection of votes was larger than the Liberals had feared or the Conservatives had hoped; and though the numbers for the government were not yet ascertained, the strength of the "noes" created the intensest excitement on the Conservative benches. Then the

\* During Easter week various important Liberal meetings had been held at Liverpool, which were attended by several cabinet ministers, who pledged themselves to stand or fall by the reform bill.

government teller walked up the House, and the stillest silence prevailed as the speaker read out the issue of the struggle. Ayes to the right, 318; noes to the left, 313: the amendment of Lord Grosvenor had been defeated by a majority of five. No sooner had the decision been uttered than the pent-up excitement of the House gave way, and cheer followed cheer in quick succession till it seemed as if quiet would never be restored. The Conservatives cheered frantically at the encouraging result of the division; the Liberals hurrahed at the very top of their voices to prove that they were not disappointed; whilst Mr. Lowe, waving his hat and shrieking himself purple, looked the very picture of boisterous enthusiasm and satisfied revenge. When silence had been restored, Mr. Gladstone said—"I propose to fix the committee for Monday, and I will then state the order of business." The division was among the largest that has ever taken place. Out of 658 members, inclusive of the speaker, 631 had voted.

Such a victory was equivalent to a ministerial defeat, and during the Sunday that followed the greatest excitement prevailed as to the course the government would adopt. Would ministers resign? Would they dissolve parliament? As they had a majority, would they still feel themselves bound to fulfil the pledges they had given and proceed with the bill? All kinds of rumours flew about London during that memorable Sunday afternoon, and gossip of the most conflicting description was circulated in Pall Mall only to be contradicted in St. James' Street. Shortly after the House assembled on Monday all doubts were set at rest. Mr. Gladstone rose and said that the government did not see, in the result of the late division, any reason or warning against persisting in the efforts they were engaged in to amend the representation of the people. Ministers would stand or fall by the bill, but as yet the bill had not fallen. He therefore proposed to introduce

the distribution of seats bill, and the bills for Scotland and Ireland. The decisive battle had still to be fought.

On the following Monday (May 7, 1866) Mr. Gladstone laid before the House the bill of the government for the redistribution of seats. The principle of the bill was that of practically disfranchising a number of small boroughs, grouping several others into one constituency, and taking one member from certain small boroughs which had hitherto sent two representatives to parliament. By this arrangement forty-nine seats were obtained. The seats thus gained Mr. Gladstone proposed to distribute among populous counties to the number of twenty-six; to give an extra representative to Liverpool, Manchester, Birmingham, Leeds, and Salford; to create the Tower Hamlets into two divisions with two members each; to create seven new electoral boroughs (Burnley, Staleybridge, Gravesend, Hartlepool, Middlesborough, Dewsbury, and the university of London) with one member each, and to make Chelsea and Kensington a borough returning two members. The remaining seven seats were allotted to Scotland.

In the debate on the second reading of the bill Mr. Disraeli addressed the House (May 14, 1866). He did not rise so much to oppose the measure as to express his own views upon the subject. He advised the House gravely to reflect upon the manner in which it was proposed to deal with the small boroughs.

"Now, I apprehend," he said, "or will at all events accept, that the real cause of all these reform bills which have been introduced since the passing of the great measure of 1832 has been to render this House a more complete representation of the country and of its various attributes. It is not difficult, it requires no profound or adroit statesmanship, to secure for the great producing interests of this country an ample and a satisfactory representation. The counties of England offer to the land, with its various products and its accumu-

lated capital, a natural and an easy mode of being represented in parliament. The chief seats of industry furnish competent men in sufficient numbers to represent the wealth, the ingenuity, and the skill of our manufactures. Perhaps the mode by which a merchant may get into this House is not altogether so easy and obvious. But still we know that there are, and that there must always be, influential constituencies connected with the commerce and navigation of the country to which a merchant of eminence may appeal with confidence for support. But there are a variety of interests in England, and connected with England, not only various but important and material interests, which cannot be ranged under the three heads of land, manufactures, or commerce. There are a variety of important trading interests of that character. There are also classes which are, perhaps, the most educated and enlightened in the country, and most considerable in their influence upon that public opinion which ultimately regulates our affairs—I mean the professional classes. And in employing that term, I do not refer merely to the learned professions, one of which cannot sit in this House and another will not; and, although I should deplore the time when we had not in our active legislation a sufficient number of gentlemen of the long robe, and should regret our again having an *indoctum parlamentum*, I would refer particularly to those who, in the present day, carve out their fortunes and obtain their incomes by the application of science to social life, like the great body of civil engineers, for example, men, too, of letters, and all those who pursue the liberal arts as a profession. But, besides all these, we are to recollect that England is the metropolis of a colonial empire; that she is at the head of a vast number of colonies, the majority of which are yearly increasing in wealth; and that every year these colonies send back to these shores their capital and their intelligence in the persons of distinguished men, who are

naturally anxious that these interests should be represented in the House of Commons. And last, and perhaps the chiefest, there is our great Indian empire. It was always the boast of this country that that distant, extensive, and gorgeous appanage was always represented in the House of Commons, and that no question could arise without the House, from the very bosom of its members, and not merely from official sources, being able to command the assistance and information of men of accurate knowledge, and of the soundest judgments upon the matter."

How then, Mr. Disraeli proceeded to inquire, could those various interests and individuals be represented in the House of Commons unless the small borough system was retained, or some substitute furnished? Owing to the feeling, now on the increase, which caused constituencies to select as their members men who lived in their neighbourhood and of whom they knew something, half of the House of Commons was really shut to all the considerable interests which were not ranged under the heads of land, manufactures, and commerce, to all the professional classes, and to the due representation of their colonial and Indian interests. To those unclassed interests, to the man who had made the East his particular study, to the man who was a great authority on finance, to the man who was a master of Indian politics and the like, the preservation of the small borough system was of the greatest service. In his opinion the House of Commons would lose influence, if it were only represented by landlords and manufacturers. Yet by the measure before them the very boroughs which had returned to the House representatives of the financial, colonial, and Indian interests were to be virtually disfranchised; and the House was called upon to attack about half of the whole number of boroughs in the country.

Then, mindful of the suggestions for reform that he himself had brought forward, Mr. Disraeli proceeded to show that there was

no inconsistency in the objections to the government scheme that he was now raising. "It may be said," he observed, "that the view I am now pressing upon the consideration of the House is inconsistent with those views which I have so long and so frequently urged as to the claims of the counties for increased representation. I think the House, if it will deign to reflect for a moment, will find no inconsistency so far as I am concerned in the matter. In the year 1848, in answer to Mr. Hume, when he brought forward his motion for parliamentary reform, I first in detail laid before the House the claims of the counties. Mr. Hume's argument was this: he said that population was the only principle upon which representation ought to be settled. 'Therefore,' he said, 'you must disfranchise the small boroughs, and give their representatives to the great towns.' In general that was the scheme and the theory of Mr. Hume. Well, in 1848, it was my duty to reply to Mr. Hume's annual motion. I then, for the sake of argument, accepted his premises; but I arrived at a different conclusion—namely, that you must give the representatives taken from the small boroughs, not to the great towns, but to the counties. Mr. Hume was the most good-natured of men, an indefatigable member of parliament, but he had certainly one fault: he would deal with every subject; and in dealing with parliamentary reform he did not bring to its consideration adequate knowledge, and could not clearly discern the right conclusion to be drawn from his own premises. We went on thus for several years, and when Lord John Russell, in 1852, in his reform bill proposed a considerable disfranchisement of the smaller boroughs, he also proposed that almost all their members, to the number, I think, of forty-five, should be given to counties, and he then said publicly that he did so in consequence of the views which I had placed before this House, feeling it impossible to resist the conclusion at which they pointed. But, although Lord John Russell accepted my

premises, I never adopted his conclusions; I never proposed that all those members should be given to the counties, because I knew that by this remarkable system of small boroughs now under discussion the counties did find a countervailing and compensatory influence, which, though it might not fully satisfy their just claims, did afford in a certain degree if not a complete, an ample representation of the landed interest. Therefore, I did not counsel a violent change, such as the destruction of the small borough system would involve, bound up as it is with so many other important interests. I was for keeping things as they are, for I have always felt that the partial representation of the landed interest by means of these small boroughs gives some variety, some valuable variety, to the representation, supplies a certain element of independent character, and on the whole, I think, has acted beneficially upon the constitution of this House."

Mr. Disraeli next discussed the general scheme of the bill. How were all those new seats to be obtained? By what arrangement were they to have counties sending in their six members and cities their three members, giving so much uniformity of elements and character to the representation in that House? It was to be effected by what was called a system of grouping. His objection to that system of grouping, which consisted entirely of grouping representative boroughs, was that it aggravated anomalies, and that by a process of wanton injustice. It succeeded only in producing an incomplete and imperfect local representation, whilst it involved a double expenditure. In Scotland, it was true, the system of grouping was successful; there the boroughs grouped were unrepresented, whilst the English boroughs to be grouped were represented, which made all the difference.

"But am I therefore an opponent," he asked, "of the system of grouping? Far from it. I think it is one that well deserves the earnest consideration of the House; it is a powerful and an efficient instrument,



if used with vigour and discretion. But where I think it might be of great advantage would be if we were to leave the present boroughs alone, and yet avail ourselves of their redundant representation, applying the principle of grouping to our unrepresented boroughs. Now, I am quite certain if that were done, as I say, with vigour and discretion, you would add considerably to the efficiency of the constituencies, and at the same time you would go a great way towards the solution of those immense difficulties connected with the county franchise which beset every ministry who attempt to deal with this question, and which the present ministry have not attempted to encounter. Let me give a striking illustration of what would be the effect of adopting the system of grouping our unrepresented towns. I do not know that the advantage of the system could be put in a more striking manner than by reference to some places with which the House is familiar. Now, take the first of the new boroughs to be enfranchised—and I willingly and cordially approve the proposition to enfranchise them. Let me take the town of Middlesborough, in Yorkshire—a town which has very recently risen into existence, principally from the ironstone of the Cleveland hills. In 1859 it was impossible we could give a representative to Middlesborough; but it is now a town of 19,000 inhabitants, and, no doubt, it is increasing rapidly. That population is not so very large and extensive that its claim to a representative, if there was not a convenient opportunity for entertaining it, should disturb the country by the agitation for a measure of reform. I do not, however, find fault with the government for the proposal to enfranchise it, because I have great confidence in its future; but close to Middlesborough is an important and flourishing town, Stockton-on-Tees, with a population of 13,300. I would join the two, which would make an electoral population of 32,300. That is the way in which I would treat Middlesborough.” And after

a similar fashion he would deal with the boroughs of Dewsbury, Burnley, and Staleybridge.

He objected to the bill because it was immature, had been drawn up carelessly, and was to be considered hurriedly. It appeared to him that both the House and the country were in ignorance as to how they should proceed in the matter, and ignorance could never settle a question. “Questions,” he said, “must be settled by knowledge, and it is not the vexation of an opposition, from whichever side of the House it may come, that prevents this bill from advancing. It is that we none of us see our way. I say it with a frankness that I trust will be pardoned, I do not believe the question of parliamentary reform is thoroughly understood by the country—is thoroughly understood by this House; and although I dare only utter it in a whisper, I do not believe that it is thoroughly understood by Her Majesty’s government. I remember often with pleasure a passage in Plato where the great sage descants upon what he calls ‘double ignorance,’ and that is where a man is ignorant that he is ignorant. But, sir, in legislating there is another kind of double ignorance that is fatal. There is, in the first place, an ignorance of principles, and, in the second, an ignorance of facts. And that is our position in dealing with this important question. There is not a majority in this House that can decide upon the principles upon which we ought to legislate in regard to this matter; there is not a man in this House who has at his command any reliable facts upon which he can decide those principles. But then the question arises—What are we to do? I admit the difficulty. I do not shut my eyes to the position in which we are placed. The country, the House of Commons, the ministry—although it may seem, an idiomatic, it is a classical phrase, as it was used by Dean Swift—are in a scrape. I should despair of escaping from this perplexity and this predicament, had I not an

unlimited confidence in the good-nature and the good sense of the House of Commons. We must help the government. We must forget the last two months. The right hon. gentleman must recross the Rubicon; we must rebuild his bridges, and supply him with vessels.\* The right hon. gentleman is in a position in which he can retire from this question of reform for the moment with dignity to himself and to his colleagues. He must not sacrifice his country, his party, or his own great name to a feeling of pique. He is still supported by a majority; he is not in the position of a minister whose reputation and the fortune of whose cabinet are staked upon individual measures in a House wherein it is known that he is in a minority. That has been the unfortunate position of others, but it is not his. He occupies a far different position. In deference to what I believe to be the wish of the country and the desire of the House of Commons, what has he to do?"

In conclusion, Mr. Disraeli advised Mr. Gladstone to abandon his scheme of grouping represented boroughs, to prepare carefully collected statistics of the borough and county franchise, and then in the ensuing session to lay before the House a measure which would command the sympathy of the country and receive the approval of parliament.

These suggestions the government de-

\* During the Easter recess Mr. Gladstone visited Liverpool, and in a long speech announced the resolution of the government to stand or fall by their reform bill. "Having produced this measure," he said, "founded in a spirit of moderation, we hope to support it with decision. It is not in our power to secure the passing of the measure; that rests more with you, and more with those whom you represent, and of whom you are a sample, than it does with us. Still we have a great responsibility, and are conscious of it; and we do not intend to flinch from it. We stake ourselves—we stake our existence as a government—and we also stake our political character, on the adoption of the bill in its main provisions. You have a right to expect from us that we should tell you what we mean, and that the trumpet which it is our business to blow should give forth no uncertain sound. Its sound has not been, and, I trust, will not be uncertain. We have passed the Rubicon—we have broken the bridge, and burned the boats behind us. We have advisedly cut off the means of retreat, and having done this, we hope that, as far as time is yet permitted, we have done our duty to the crown and to the nation."

clined to accept. Ministers declared that the bill they had framed was a measure of sound and constitutional reform, and they refused to pay any heed to what they considered as the retrograde and unworthy counsel of the Opposition. A new element was now introduced into the debate by Sir Rainald Knightley, the stanch Tory member for Northamptonshire, who moved that provision should be made for the better prevention of bribery and corruption at elections. In spite of the opposition of the government the motion was carried against ministers, much to the glee of the Conservatives, by a majority of ten. The system of grouping the boroughs proposed by the government was then discussed, and appeared the chief object of contention on this occasion. Capt. Hayter moved "That this House, while ready to consider the general subject of a redistribution of seats, is of opinion that the system of grouping proposed by Her Majesty's government is neither convenient nor equitable, and that the scheme is otherwise not sufficiently matured to form the basis of a satisfactory measure." A discussion followed upon this amendment, which continued for four nights. The tone adopted by the Conservative party was that the system of grouping boroughs was wholly new in England, that it destroyed the existence and identity of constituencies, and that it was unnatural, because there was not only little harmony between the boroughs to be grouped, but in many cases positive antagonism. Mr. Lowe, amid loud laughter, declared that the proposed system of grouping was like asking a man to marry several wives, nay worse, it was like asking him to marry several widows. Mr. Disraeli also spoke, reiterating his former objections and entering into statistics not necessary now to repeat. So firm and united was the House of Commons in favour of the amendment that Mr. Gladstone declared that the government had not at any time stated the principle of grouping to be vital to the bill. The object of Captain Hayter was

therefore attained by this admission, and he consequently declined to persevere with his amendment.

The fate of the two bills—for the Representation of the People's Bill and the Redistribution of Seats' Bill had been referred to the same committee—became every day more apparent. The general feeling of the House was opposed to them, and ministers were soon forced to see that it was useless to continue fighting for a losing cause. Upon the proposal of Mr. Walpole to fix the county occupation franchise at £20 instead of £14, Mr. Disraeli spoke in favour of the amendment. He maintained that the first thing to be done was to ascertain the general character of the county population; and so far from consisting, as Mr. Cardwell had asserted, simply of farmers and farm labourers, it would be found that after all the unrepresented towns over 5000 inhabitants had been estimated, there would be a village population in the counties equal to all the population of the represented towns. That part of the population—half of the nation—ought to be secured the fair and legitimate exercise of its suffrages, without the interference of a strange element which had no interest in common with it; and if that could be done by a £10 franchise, he should be perfectly willing to consent to such an extension. But as yet, he said, he was quite in the dark as to the moves of the government.

"The government, I admit," he avowed, "when they brought forward their bill for the redistribution of seats, did offer to the House a clear and distinct programme of the mode in which they thought the claims of the counties in that respect ought to be met. It was most unsatisfactory—nothing could be more unsatisfactory—still it was clear and definite. But the government, night after night, have given up every part of that programme, and, if he could infer anything clearly from the speech of the secretary of state [Mr. Card-

well] in the matter, the whole affair is now *in nubibus*. There is not a question respecting the direct representation of large bodies of the people not now represented, that is not completely unsettled and thrown upon the table for discussion. We have no plan on the part of the government to guide us; we have no means by which we can arrive in the least degree at what the views of the government are; and until we have some idea of that, I confess myself totally incapable of entering into the question as to whether the franchise for counties should be £50 or £30, or £14 or £10. I am perfectly ready to support a £10 qualification for counties, if it is a *bona fide* qualification. If the inhabitants of the counties, whatever may be their pursuits and calling—if that moiety of the English nation which is described by the secretary of state as a collection of farmers and farm labourers—if that moiety of the English nation are to be permitted to enjoy their franchises without interference from strange elements, and from bodies which really have distinct interests of their own, often directly represented in these towns—if all that were fairly arranged I should be the last person in the world who would shrink from a large and liberal settlement of the question."

The amendment of Mr. Walpole was negatived by a majority of fourteen. The ministerial victory was, however, but short-lived. The next dispute in committee was as to the basis of value according to which the franchise was to be fixed. The government proposed to adopt the rental as the standard of value, whilst the Opposition desired that rating should be made the basis. Lord Dunkellin moved an amendment to that effect, and on a division ministers found themselves in a minority of eleven. This defeat was decisive of the fate of the government. Lord Russell tendered his resignation, which was accepted, and Lord Derby received Her Majesty's commands to form a cabinet.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE RESOLUTIONS.

ON Lord Derby being commanded to form an administration, certain futile preliminary negotiations were entered into. The incoming prime minister, aware that the Conservative party were in a minority in the House of Commons, tendered proposals to the leaders of the disaffected Whigs. Office was offered to the Earl of Clarendon and others, but declined; the refusal was, however, accompanied by a statement made by Lord Grosvenor that though these members of the Whig party were unanimous in coming to the conclusion that they ought not to accept office, yet they were prepared to give the new government an independent support. Thus foiled in his efforts to effect a coalition with the "cave of Adullam," Lord Derby now looked exclusively among his own supporters. Nor was his search bootless, for the ministry he framed was undoubtedly a strong one. With the exception of that stanch representative of the English squirearchy, Mr. Henley, who did not hold a portfolio, the new government comprised all the more prominent ability of the Conservative party. Lord Chelmsford again took his seat upon the woolsack. Mr. Disraeli once more controlled the expenditure of the country as chancellor of the exchequer; the foreign office was presided over by the sound common sense and the profound knowledge derived from blue-book literature of Lord Stanley; at the home office the amiable and accomplished Mr. Spencer Walpole, who had deserted a lucrative practice at the chancery bar for politics, held the seals; to the Earl of Carnarvon, who ever since he had been complimented by Lord Derby upon his maiden speech had been rapidly rising in the opinion of the country as an orator,

author, and statesman, the welfare of the colonies was intrusted; at the India office sat Viscount Cranbourne, better known as Lord Robert Cecil, the caustic critic of the actions of the Liberal party in the House of Commons, and outside parliament the brilliant reviewer of Liberal policy and exponent of Conservative tenets in the periodical literature to which he anonymously contributed; General Peel, whose practical acquaintance with military details had made him an authority in the House of Commons on all subjects relating to the army, was at the war office; Sir Stafford Northcote, whose sound financial theories gave confidence to the commercial classes, was appointed president of the board of trade; Mr. Gathorne Hardy, whose assiduous attention to parliamentary duties, whose biting eloquence and searching criticisms, and whose devotion to the cause of the church had now made him a great power in the country, sat at the poor-law board; the parliamentary experience of Sir John Pakington was to be made use of at the admiralty; the Duke of Buckingham presided over the council, Lord Malmesbury held the privy seal, Lord John Manners looked after the woods and forests, and the popular Marquis of Abercorn crossed St. George's Channel as lord-lieutenant of Ireland. The minor appointments in the administration were filled up by a similar recognition of parliamentary ability and Conservative fidelity.

On his re-election as one of the members for Buckinghamshire, owing to his seat having been vacated by his acceptance of office, Mr. Disraeli took the opportunity to address his constituents at some length upon the present position of affairs and the future policy of the

government. He explained that, though every nation in Europe was armed to the teeth and standing in a menacing attitude, there was no occasion for England to be called upon to abandon her declared principle of non-interference. Nor was this isolation humiliating to us. "The abstention of England," he said, "from any unnecessary interference in the affairs of Europe is the consequence, not of her decline of power, but of her increased strength. England is no longer a mere European power—she is the metropolis of a great maritime empire extending to the boundaries of the furthest ocean. It is not that England has taken refuge in a state of apathy that she now almost systematically declines to interfere in the affairs of the continent of Europe. England is as ready and as willing to interfere as in old days when the necessity of her position requires it. There is no power, indeed, that interferes more than England. She interferes in Asia because she is really more an Asiatic power than an European. She interferes in Australia, in Africa, and New Zealand, where she carries on war often on a great scale. Therefore it is not because England does not recognize her duty to interfere in the affairs of the continent of Europe that persons are justified in declaring that she has relinquished her imperial position, and has taken refuge in the *otium cum dignitate* which agrees with the decline of life, of power, and of prosperity. On the contrary, she has a greater sphere of action than any European power, and she has duties devolving upon her on a much larger scale. Not that we can ever look with indifference upon what takes place on the continent. We are interested in the peace and prosperity of Europe, and I do not say that there may not be occasions in which it may be the duty of England to interfere in European wars."

Then after having stated that the relations between England and America were most cordial, and that it would be the duty of the government to check the excessive emigration going on in Ireland, which he viewed

as a great political and social calamity to that country, Mr. Disraeli passed on to the exciting question of the hour, the question which had overthrown the late government, and which, it was said, the present cabinet were unfit to deal with—parliamentary reform.

"I hear very often," he said, "or perhaps I should say I read very often, that the subject of parliamentary reform is the great difficulty of the present ministry, and will be their stumbling-block. I am quite of a different opinion. I see no difficulty in the subject at all; and if we stumble, rest assured we shall not stumble over the subject of parliamentary reform. If parliamentary reform is to be dealt with, I consider that the present government have as good a right to deal with it as any body of statesmen in existence. The great reform bill of 1832 was mainly devised by Lord Derby, and was entirely carried by his energy; and with regard to the only measure since the great reform bill on the subject of parliamentary reform ever mentioned with respect, *why I myself brought it in*. I have remarked during the recent campaign in the House of Commons that every division that took place, and every strong manifestation of opinion which was expressed, ratified the principle upon which the bill of 1859 was founded. And, night after night, sitting in that house opposite to me, distinguished Liberals of all hues rose, and in a tone of courteous penitence publicly avowed how much they regretted they had voted against the bill of 1859. Gentlemen, I want to know under such circumstances what is to prevent us, if the question is to be dealt with, dealing with it in as efficient a manner as any other body of public men? We understand it, or at least we ought to understand it, better than several who have dealt with it. I cannot, therefore, at all agree that the subject of parliamentary reform will be a source of trouble to the present ministry, or that it will be one of the causes of their downfall, if it ever occur

"Having said this, I frankly tell you I am not going to give any pledge on the part of Her Majesty's government that when parliament meets next year we are going to deal with the question of parliamentary reform. We hold ourselves perfectly free to do that which is best for the country. I see no downcast or disconsolate faces in consequence of this announcement. At the same time it is my duty to assure you that, if we do deal with the subject at any time, we shall deal with it in the spirit of the English constitution. We shall not attempt to remodel the institutions of the country upon any foreign type whatever, whether it be American or whether it be French. I attribute the failure of the late government in dealing with this subject to the confusion of ideas which prevailed amongst them upon the very principles on which they ought to legislate. It was impossible clearly to understand whether their measure was founded on the rights of man or the rights of numbers. We who opposed their views do not recognize that the rights of man should prevail in our legislation, or that a numerical majority should dictate to an ancient nation of various political orders and classes like the present. What we want to see is, whenever any increase in the electoral constituency of this country takes place, that it should take place in unison with the constitution of the country. What we wish is that the electoral power should be deposited with the best men of all classes, and that is the principle upon which, if called upon, we shall propose to legislate."

Mr. Disraeli thus concluded:—"We are sometimes taunted with not having a policy. Persons who say that are generally eccentric individuals who are peculiarly interested in some fantastic scheme in which they think are involved and invested all the causes of national prosperity and popular greatness. We do not pretend to have a policy, if that is a definition of a policy. But our policy, to our minds, is definite and distinct; it is

to uphold our constitution in church and state. It is to bring in all those measures and to pursue in every respect that policy which will secure to this country the continuance of prosperity and peace. That appears to me to be the policy which ought to be pursued by an English ministry; and if it be pursued in spirit and in truth it will entitle them to, and will obtain for them, the confidence and the respect of their fellow-countrymen."

The Conservatives acceded to office at a troublous moment in the history of Europe. In spite of all the efforts of France, England, and Russia to prevent hostilities, war had broken out between Prussia and Austria. The dispute arose nominally out of the eternal Schleswig-Holstein question, but really as to whether Austria or Prussia was to be supreme in Germany. The Austrian governor of Holstein had convoked an assembly of the states to meet, which aroused the jealousy of Prussia, who marched her troops into Schleswig and asserted her right to a joint occupation of the duchy. Upon this Austria retired. The Prussian governor of Schleswig now issued a proclamation to the inhabitants of Holstein, in which he declared the provisional government abolished, and appointed a Prussian president for the administration of affairs of both the duchies of Schleswig and Holstein. Against these proceedings Austria protested, accusing Prussia of a violation of the Gastein convention, by which it had been agreed that Prussia was to possess Schleswig and Austria Holstein. This protest was in vain and war was declared, which soon extended the area of its hostilities. The conflict that ensued eventually ushered in the unification of Germany. Saxony, Hanover, Hesse Cassel, and Nassau resolved upon carrying into execution a decree of the Frankfort Diet, that the forces of the different states, members of the Bund, should be mobilised. Prussia objected; her objections were not listened to, and war broke out between Prussia and Saxony and the

other states. Austria supported Saxony; then Italy, deeming it a fit moment to obtain Venetia, declared war against Austria; and thus a large portion of Europe was once more engaged in hostilities.

We know the end of the struggle. The Prussians entered Hanover and occupied Dresden; at Custoza the Italians were defeated twice by the Austrians; twice the Prussians were repulsed in Galicia; the Hanoverians were defeated at Langensalza; then came the victories of Prussia over Austria at Nachod, at Trautenau, at Munchingratz, and the crowning triumph at Sadowa. Peace was signed at Prague. Austria recognized the dissolution of the German Bund, and consented to a new formation of Germany in which she should take no part. The duchies of Schleswig and Holstein were transferred to Prussia, and Austria paid a large sum to defray the expenses of the war. Peace was also entered into between Austria and Italy, which resulted in the latter power gaining Venetia and the Quadrilateral. As one of the consequences of this war Prussia incorporated with her dominions Hanover and other states, and thus laid the foundation of the united Germany which now exists.

In this struggle England took no part. Lord Derby declared that the conduct of the government with regard to the war would be to maintain a strict and impartial neutrality between the contending parties. He, however, professed himself ready at any time, when there was the slightest gleam of hope that the good offices of an English government might lead to a termination of the struggle and to the restoration of peace, to place the services of his cabinet at the disposal of the other neutral powers, so that the horrors of war might be terminated.

The Conservative government, though coming into power at the close of the session, had many important matters to consider. There were questions relative to the deposition of Governor Eyre and the Jamaica insurrection, to the supplementary estimates which had to be moved, and

to the terrible panic in the city owing to the list of commercial failures which every day occurred, and which created the deepest anxiety throughout the country—all of which had to be dealt with and discussed by ministers. Thanks, however, to the efforts of unscrupulous agitators, the most prominent then of all subjects was the question of parliamentary reform. With a Conservative government in power, the lower orders, worked upon by their mischievous and self-seeking leaders, had come to the conclusion that reform would again be shelved, and that all hope of an extension of the suffrage would be at once crushed. Yet the government had given no grounds for so hasty a judgment. The prime minister had expressed himself cautiously as to any future measure, but certainly not in a hostile tone. "Nothing," said Lord Derby, "would give me greater pleasure than to see a very considerable portion of the class now excluded admitted to the franchise; but, on the other hand, I am afraid that the portion of the community who are most clamorous for the passing of a reform bill are not that portion who would be satisfied with any measure such as could be approved of by the two great political parties in the country. I do not mean to say it is an argument against introducing it, but I greatly fear that any such measure would not put a stop to the agitation which prevails, and would only be made a stepping-stone for further organic changes. As I said before, I reserve to myself the most entire liberty as to whether the present government should, or should not, undertake in a future season to bring in a measure for the amendment of the representation of the people."

Mr. Disraeli had, as we have seen, expressed himself with equal caution upon the subject, though in more encouraging tones; but the masses, turbulent, ignorant, and out of work, and completely under the influence of their unscrupulous agents, had made up their minds that the Conservative party was hostile to the cause

of reform, and that their object could only be attained by assuming a threatening attitude. Meetings were held at Primrose Hill and at Trafalgar Square, where speakers, who could obtain notoriety after no other fashion than by a base and disloyal agitation, vehemently denounced the policy of the government, of which they knew nothing, to a rabble composed of the scum and outcast of London, who no more represented the sober, intelligent working classes desirous of the franchise than our convicts represent the honesty and industry of the country. It was arranged that a monster meeting should be held in Hyde Park, when certain conclusions, based upon spite and inspired by ignorance, which were ambitiously termed "resolutions," were to be passed condemnatory of all opposition to the cause of reform. The government, however, fully alive to the dangers which might ensue from the assembling in our chief public park of all that was vile and disorderly, promptly forbade the meeting. A notice to that effect was delivered to Sir Richard Mayne, the chief commissioner of police. "There is nothing," said Mr. Walpole, the home secretary, in defence of the instructions which he had issued, "in the notice signed by Sir Richard Mayne to imply that processions, orderly conducted, are illegal—there is nothing in that notice to prevent persons from holding meetings in the usual way for the purpose of discussing politics or any other subject; but I think that any one holding the office which I have the honour to hold is bound to attend to the public peace of this metropolis; and if he believes that the parks, which are open by the permission of Her Majesty for the benefit of all Her Majesty's subjects, are likely to be devoted to any purpose that would interfere with the quiet recreation of the people, and might lead to riot and disorderly demonstrations, he would be most blamable if he did not issue an order similar to that which I have given."

In refusing this permission Mr. Walpole

was acting strictly within his right. The law officers of the crown, in 1855, when a similar question arose as to the right of the public to hold meetings in the parks, had laid it down that "there is a right in point of law to close the gates and exclude the public from the parks," and that "the authority to close and to exclude the public from the parks is that which every landowner has to prevent the public from trespassing on his lands; for we are of opinion that the public have not acquired any legal right to use the parks by reason of the continued user under the license and by the favour of the crown." Because ignorant men had been permitted, by the leniency of the authorities, to spout blasphemy and sedition beneath a particular tree in Hyde Park to an audience which would listen to anything so long as it was subversive of all that upheld order and morality, it did not necessarily follow that in moments of crisis such permission should not be withheld. We may ignore what is simply contemptible, but when the contemptible has on certain occasions within it the elements of danger, authority is right to step in and vigorously to interfere. With that majestic derision of all decisions opposed to his self-established ruling so characteristic of the true demagogue, Mr. Bright now came upon the scene. He ignored the verdict of the law officers of the crown, and bade turbulence exhibit its mischievous power. "You have asserted your right," he said, "to meet on Primrose Hill and in Trafalgar Square. I hope after Monday night no one will doubt your right to meet in Hyde Park. If a public meeting in a public park is denied you, and if millions of intelligent and honest men are denied the franchise, on what foundation do our liberties rest, or is there in the country any liberty but the toleration of the ruling class? This is a serious question, but it is necessary to ask it, and some answer must be given to it."

The advice was acted upon. The venal and disreputable who arrogated to them-



selves the title of "reformers" found themselves excluded from the park, at the railings of which they had assembled by thousands. Then followed the struggle between authority and license, between discipline and disorder. The police were overpowered, the slender barriers were broken down, and the next moment, like a sewer that has burst its flood-gates, the unsavoury tide of humanity flooded the park, spreading devastation and confusion wherever it flowed. For hours the reign of law was suspended. Flower beds were trodden down, gravel paths were broken up, the iron hurdles were flung aside or used as weapons to charge the out-numbered police, whilst the well-kept grass was turned, beneath the tread of many men, into a miry bog. As if this was not sufficient, small bands, to prove how worthy they were of the franchise, paraded up and down the more silent streets, and smashed the windows of unpopular politicians. The member for Birmingham had every reason to be proud of the new adherents that had swelled his following.

This disgraceful episode led to some parliamentary criticism. A few of the more prominent Radicals complained of the course the government had pursued. Mr. Disraeli defended the conduct of the home secretary. However much, he said (July 24, 1866), they might deplore what had occurred—however easy it might be, after the event, to be as profoundly sage as some of those who had favoured the House with their opinions—he thought on the whole that every prudent man would have taken the same course as that which the government had pursued, and which their predecessors in office had acknowledged that they themselves would have taken. "Surely," said Mr. Disraeli, "if we calmly consider what has occurred, I think there cannot be two opinions, except among those gentlemen who intend to deliver speeches in Hyde Park, that meetings for political or religious purposes ought not to be encouraged in that locality. I think the

reasons that have been given are quite unanswerable; but perhaps I may be permitted to remind the House, in addition to what has already been said, that in all those public parks which during the last few years have been happily established in our great towns, *it is a standing rule that no public meeting should be held in them for any political or religious discussion.* Thus the common sense for which the English people are distinguished has brought them to the same conclusion that the practical men have adopted, who are responsible for these matters in the metropolis."

Mr. Disraeli was, however, careful to draw the distinction between the intelligent and respectable working classes, who were really earnest in their advocacy for the extension of the franchise, and the ruthless rabble who looked upon a political demonstration as synonymous with ribaldry and robbery. "As far as regards the working classes," he continued, "from all that I have heard, from all we know of them, it never for a moment crossed the mind of the government that it would be the real working classes who were holding this meeting that would be authors of riot and disturbance. What we said was that a meeting of this kind would tend possibly and probably to riot—and has it not? Riot may be going on even at this moment. I live close to the spot where these disturbances have occurred, *and I do not know this night if I shall get home safely, if indeed by this time I still have a home to go to.* Having then had a good opportunity of observing the turbulent among the people who form these meetings, I am bound to say that they are not of the working classes, and that they are very different from the sensible and well-meaning subjects of Her Majesty whom they taint. But the tendency of those meetings—though very honest and honourable gentlemen may be the promoters of them, and though they may be attended by many sensible and loyal subjects of Her Majesty—is to give an occasion for all the scum of a great city to take advantage of the circumstance, and to

conduct themselves in the manner which has unfortunately taken place." Mr. Disraeli concluded by denying that he and his party were opposed to public meetings being held by the working classes. He was, on the contrary, in favour of public meetings of the working classes on subjects in which they took an interest. He believed public meetings properly held, and at the proper time and place, to be most desirable. He regarded them under such circumstances as one of the great political safety-valves to which the country should trust. So far from discouraging them, he would allow of no impediment to public meetings of the working classes at the right time and place on political subjects, confident as he was that it was to the advantage of society that such meetings should take place. But he was positive that unless they were held at the proper time and place they gave the opportunity for riot, tumult, and disturbance. Indeed, he argued, that what had occurred had only proved the soundness of his view.

The agitation which had thus set in as to the necessity of reform continued throughout the year. During the recess, though other subjects were attracting public attention—the outbreak of cholera, the commercial depression, the floods in Derbyshire and Lancashire, the distress in the east end of London, and the like—yet the one question of parliamentary reform was ever being brought forward for discussion, to the exclusion and overshadowing of all other topics. Reform demonstrations were held at Birmingham, at Manchester, at Leeds, at Glasgow, at Dublin, and at London, where Mr. Bright was ever busy abusing the government, girding at Mr. Lowe as the traducer of the working classes, and urging his hearers to press on their agitation for restoring the British constitution with all its freedom to the British people.

The English people, as Mr. Disraeli more than once said, are among the most excitable when once their passions have been fully aroused. The subject of parliamentary

reform had hitherto been treated by the nation at large with an indifference which bordered on contempt. The proposals of Lord John Russell, the various motions of Mr. Locke King, the amendments of Mr. Baines, all had fallen somewhat flat both upon the House of Commons and the country. Even the bill of Mr. Disraeli, which both parties in the state were now agreed upon in regarding as the soundest measure upon the subject that had as yet been introduced, had created nothing of the stir and agitation which characterized the discussion of the first reform bill. The proceedings of 1859 had been, as we have said, more of a parliamentary manoeuvre than in obedience to a national wish. But now, as the eloquence of Mr. Bright lashed the latent passions of mankind into fury and into action, like some angry blast which rouses the sleeping wavelets of the sea into a storm, Englishmen arrived hastily at the conclusion that the franchise must and should be extended. Agitation, detraction, and the bitterest partisanship sounded throughout the land. Reform was now an absolute necessity for the welfare of the state; and the neglect with which the question had been treated during the last three decades was amply atoned for by the virulence and the vehemence with which its claims were advanced on all sides, and forced down the throats of the indifferent and the apathetic. One enlightened artisan—a blower of glass and of his own trumpet—declared, amid the boisterous cheers of his followers, his resolve to obtain reform. "The question was," he cried, with the grace of diction peculiar to these self-constituted leaders of the masses, "would they suffer these little-minded, decrepit, hump-backed, one-eyed scoundrels who sat in the House of Commons to rob and defraud them any longer of their rights—whether those who had squandered the people's earnings like water should continue to do so? From one end to the other of this land their fiat had gone forth that they meant to be free. What

had Lord Derby done? He had translated Homer. But he could not make one of those beautiful specimens of glass work which had been carried in procession that day. There was not a stocking-weaver in Leicester, or a clodhopper in the kingdom, rendering service to the state, who was not quite as useful as Lord Derby. What the people meant to do was to drive the devil out of the House of Commons and let God Almighty in." Such was the eloquence which, Mr. Bright having struck the keynote, now sounded from the platforms of "League" meetings in almost every town and village throughout the kingdom. Reform had developed from a party cry into a national demand.

Upon so keen an observer of the tide of human affairs as Mr. Disraeli the setting of the current towards reform was not lost. The chancellor of the exchequer watched the agitation as a statesman and as the practical man of the world. He saw that it was useless further to shelve the subject, and that the matter must be resolutely taken in hand and thoroughly dealt with. As he himself afterwards said, a question which had been tossed to and fro during the last fifteen years, and which had determined the fate of two cabinets, could no longer be adjourned. It was a subject no longer to be the sport of scheming agitators or the hobby of independent members, but to be gravely considered by the government and exhaustively treated. It was true, as he had before remarked, that there was no such word as "finality" in English politics; but the hour had arrived when the question, for a time at least, must be settled; and the only manner in which it could be settled was by generously acceding to the demands of public opinion.

At the opening of parliament (February 5, 1867) the programme of the cabinet was laid before the country, especial prominence being given to the topic which had created such discussion during the autumn and winter of the past

year. "Your attention," said the royal speech, "will be again called to the representation of the people in parliament, and I trust that your deliberations, conducted in a spirit of moderation and mutual forbearance, may lead to the adoption of measures which, without unduly disturbing the balance of political power, shall freely extend the elective franchise." Little delay was allowed to intervene after this statement had been made. The session was essentially to be one for the discussion of reform, and no time was lost before the question was brought forward.

A few days after the meeting of the Houses, Mr. Disraeli rose (February 11) to introduce the government scheme. He began with the request that the subject should no longer be regarded as a party question. It was, in his opinion, expedient that parliamentary reform should no longer be a question which should decide the fate of ministries. He had arrived at that conclusion from the simple but irresistible reason that all parties in the state had attempted to deal with the subject, and all had alike failed. The Whigs had failed to deal with it in 1852; the coalition government of Lord Aberdeen had failed to deal with it in 1854; the Conservatives had failed to deal with it in 1859; the moderate Liberals under Lord Palmerston had failed to deal with it in 1860; and again in 1866 Earl Russell had attempted to deal with the question, and had failed. He then proceeded to trace the seeds of the present demand for a change to the disfranchisement of the labouring classes in 1832, a step which he had always considered a great error. He would not go so far as to say that since that date the claims of the working classes had been treated disrespectfully by the House of Commons; but he felt himself forced to admit that such claims had been met too often in an Epicurean spirit which would do anything for present quiet. As yet no scheme had been introduced which was calculated to settle the controversy. It was the House of Commons—not a

political party, not any political leader—which had disturbed the settlement of 1832; and it was the House of Commons, and not any party, which had baffled every effort to pass a reform bill. The Conservatives had religiously observed the clauses of the bill of 1832; and it was not until Lord John Russell himself had proposed to tamper with the measure that the Conservatives felt themselves at liberty to act in the matter as they deemed best. And since that date they had never posed as the opponents of reform.

"It was not," said Mr. Disraeli, "until 1851 and 1852, when dark rumours were abroad as to the intentions of Lord John Russell, who in a very solemn manner in this House had pledged himself on the faith of the Whigs to the principle of finality, that the Conservative party had to consider what course to take if Lord John Russell should recede from that undertaking. I believe I may say that was a subject which was considered by the most eminent and leading men—many now departed or lost to us—men held in the highest honour for their integrity and public spirit, like the late Duke of Richmond, Lord George Bentinck, Mr. Bankes, and others who sat in this House—and many who still live and were in intimate communication with Lord Derby; and they came to the resolution that if Lord John Russell gave up the Act of 1832, nothing would induce them to take up a position of opposition to parliamentary reform. And their course has been consistent throughout. There never was a bill brought forward on the subject of which the second reading was opposed by us."

Since the House of Commons had incurred a peculiar responsibility in the matter of reform, Mr. Disraeli proposed to take the House into his confidence, and ask its co-operation. He did not desire to relieve the government from its due share of responsibility, but he wished the former failures to be avoided; and he thought that if the House would afford

ministers some intimation as to its views on the main points of controversy by resolutions *before a bill was introduced*, much loss of time and needless discussion might be spared. The resolutions he proposed for that purpose were as follows:—

"1. That the number of electors for counties and boroughs in England and Wales ought to be increased.

"2. That such increase may best be effected by both reducing the value of the qualifying tenement in counties and boroughs, and by adding other franchises not dependent on such value.

"3. That while it is desirable that a more direct representation should be given to the labouring class, it is contrary to the constitution of this realm to give to any one class or interest a predominating power over the rest of the community.

"4. That the occupation franchise in counties and boroughs shall be based on the principle of rating.

"5. That the principle of plurality of votes, if adopted by parliament, would facilitate the settlement of the borough franchise.

"6. That it is expedient to revise the existing distribution of seats.

"7. That in such revision it is not expedient that any borough now represented in parliament should be wholly disfranchised.

"8. That in revising the existing distribution of seats this house will acknowledge as its main consideration the expediency of supplying representation to places not at present represented, and which may be considered entitled to that privilege.

"9. That it is expedient that provision should be made for the better prevention of bribery and corruption at elections.

"10. That it is expedient that the system of registration of voters in counties should be assimilated as far as possible to that which prevails in boroughs.

"11. That it shall be open to every parliamentary elector, if he thinks fit, to record his vote by means of a polling-paper duly signed and authenticated.

"12. That provision be made for diminishing the distances which voters have to travel for the purpose of recording their votes, so that no expenditure for such purpose shall hereafter be legal.

"13. That a humble address be presented to Her Majesty, praying Her Majesty to issue a royal commission to form and submit to the consideration of parliament a scheme for new and enlarged boundaries of the existing parliamentary boroughs where the population extends beyond the limits now assigned for such boroughs; and to fix, sub-

ject to the decision of parliament, the boundaries of such other boroughs as parliament may deem fit to be represented in this House."

Mr. Disraeli was perfectly aware to what charge he would lay himself open by asking the House of Commons to consider the resolutions he had brought forward, and he thus concluded:—

"Do not let the House suppose that we are asking them to go into committee, and allow us to propose resolutions because we are angling for a policy. We are not angling for a policy. We have distinct principles which will guide us, and which we wish the House to sanction. But there are several subjects besides those which I have indicated, if not of equal still of very great importance in the happy settlement of this question, upon which it would be desirable that the opinion of the House should be given; and on these subjects we should defer to the opinion of the House. If we go into this committee to move resolutions, in the application of those principles we should consult in every way the sense and accept the suggestions of the House. And although we are not prepared in any way to shrink from the leading principles of the policy that we hope may be sanctioned, we still believe that on a question of this paramount importance, if the House deigns to co-operate with us and come into council with us, many suggestions of great value will be made which may add to the fulness and completion of the consummation. I can only say, on the part of my colleagues, that those suggestions will be received not only with candour, but, if found to deserve the acceptance of the House and appear for the public advantage, they will be accepted with gratitude. We shall enter into the committee and avail ourselves of all that the learning, the genius, the experience of the House can suggest for the solution of this question, and to all we shall give a cordial and candid deference.

"The course we adopt," continued Mr. Disraeli, "is not one flattering to our-

selves"—an admission which drew from Mr. Bright a peculiarly offensive cheer; "but it is more flattering to assist, however humbly, in effecting that which we think for the public good, than to bring forward mock measures which we know the spirit of party will not pass. And let me tell the member for Birmingham, who gave me that ironical cheer, that there are others besides himself who think that it is desirable that this question should be settled, but who wish it to be settled in the spirit of the English constitution. Of course, it would be very agreeable to us to bring forward at once a complete measure backed by a confiding majority, and having the assurance of settling a question which engages the attention of a great nation. None of my colleagues pretend to be superior to

'The last infirmity of noble minds.'

But this is not a time in which we are to consider the complacency of ministers, or even the pride of parties. I earnestly hope that the House of Commons will rise to this occasion. I earnestly hope that the House of Commons, in unison with that gracious speech which Her Majesty delivered to her parliament, authorized by antecedent circumstances and urged by the necessity of the case, will divest itself of party feeling, and give ministers on this, if on no other occasion, the advantage of its co-operation and cordial support."

This hope was not to be gratified. Neither the action nor the proposals of the government met with parliamentary approval. It was not the province of the House of Commons, as Mr. Disraeli himself had so often ruled, to suggest a policy to ministers, but to deliberate upon the policy which ministers laid before it. The House of Commons was not the executive, but the chamber of registry to the executive. It was alleged that the course taken by the government was not calculated to advance the question of reform. As ministers had no reason to fear a repetition of the tactics of 1859,

it would be far wiser for them, it was suggested, to abandon the preliminary stage of proceeding by resolutions, and bring in their bill at once. The appeal of the chancellor of the exchequer to the House of Commons was ignoble; it signified in plain English, sneered the Opposition, "Say what you like to us, only for God's sake leave us our places." Then the extreme Radicals complained of the vague character of the resolutions, and objected, from what they could gather of their nature, to the policy indicated. They asserted that no measure for the improvement of the representation of the people in parliament would be satisfactory unless it was based upon the principle of the people themselves being directly and personally represented, instead of such representation being virtual and sectional. The only manner, they declared, in which direct and real representation could be effected was by means of residential and registered manhood suffrage protected in its free and honest exercise by the ballot. Mr. Disraeli was pressed to give further information as to the views of the government upon the subject, but he declined to state any particulars until the hour had arrived for him to explain the nature of the proposed resolutions.

The excited curiosity of the nation was soon satisfied. Early in the afternoon of February 25, 1867, Mr. Disraeli rose to make his eagerly expected statement. The House was crowded in every part, members sitting upon the floor and gladly availing themselves of the most uncomfortable situations so long as they offered a coigne of vantage. The galleries allotted to strangers, and to those who had the privilege of entrance, were so thronged that several peers and ambassadors had to be excluded from the scene. It was even with difficulty that room was obtained at the bar for the Prince of Wales. The lobby was full of constituents sending in cards to members which were never delivered, or praying to be taken in under the gallery, or vainly waiting in the hope of succeeding some

bored or hungry stranger who might vacate his seat. In Westminster Hall and outside the House a large crowd had assembled, eager to pick up any intelligence that might leak out from the popular chamber. Amid this scene of excitement Mr. Disraeli, in the usual calm and passionless manner with which he began his speeches, proceeded to open his case. He did not, he said, rise to condemn the great Act of 1832, but, what he had attempted in 1859, to improve and complete that Act.

"Sir," he exclaimed, "the men who devised and carried the Reform Act of 1832 were statesmen, and their names will live in history. They encountered a great emergency, and they proved themselves equal to the occasion. A national party, a party which is nothing if it be not national, had by too long a possession of power shrunk into a heartless oligarchy. The Whig party seized the occasion which was before them, and threw the government of this country into the hands of the middle classes. Never, to my mind, was any political experiment more successful. Never has a country been better governed, to my mind, than England has been during the last thirty years. Never during a like period have the annals of the House of Commons been more resplendent. But, sir, there was a deficiency in that Act—I will not say an intended deficiency, but one which certainly arose from want of useful information on an important part of a great question; and perhaps, without any offence to the hon. gentlemen opposite, I might say that omission was perhaps more naturally made by a party which, generally speaking, had built up their policy rather upon Liberal opinions than upon popular rights. The political rights of the working classes which existed before the Act of 1832, and which not only existed but were acknowledged, were on that occasion disregarded and even abolished; and during the whole period that has since elapsed, in consequence of the great vigour that has been given to the government of this country,

and of the multiplicity of subjects of commanding interest that have engaged and engrossed attention, no great inconvenience has been experienced from that cause. Still, during all that time there has been a feeling, sometimes a very painful feeling, that questions have arisen which have been treated in this House without that entire national sympathy which is desirable. Well, it is our business on this occasion, in the first and most important place, to endeavour to offer some proposition to the House which will restore those rights that were lost in 1832 to the labouring class of the country, and which will bring back again that fair partition of political power which the old constitution of the country recognized, and which, if practicable, it seems to me that all of us are desirous should be accomplished. There is a very great difference between the period of 1832 and the period of 1867. In the period of 1832 parliamentary reform was a subject to fire the imaginations and excite the passions of all men. It was one which banded parties together with a heat and with a power such as very rarely occur. But on the present occasion there is great unanimity on the subject. We who have succeeded to the place which we occupy in the spirit of the constitution, finding that question unsettled, and by universal consent requiring settlement, can appeal with confidence, as I now understand, to the candid interpretation of the House of Commons upon our plans and motives, and can count even on the support, of course the discriminating but still the not less generous support, of our political rivals."

Having delivered himself of this introduction Mr. Disraeli proceeded to deal in a plain, business-like fashion with the resolutions. He proposed four new franchises. First, an educational franchise, which would include persons who had taken a degree, ministers of religion, and others. Second, a savings-bank franchise, whereby a deposit of £30 and a retention of it for one year would give a qualification.

The third new franchise would be the possession of £50 in the public funds; and the fourth the payment of twenty shillings in direct taxation. He calculated that under the first franchise the addition of voters in boroughs would be 10,000; under the second, 35,000; under the third, 7,000; and under the fourth, 30,000.

With regard to the resolution affirming that the principle of plurality of votes would facilitate the settlement of the borough franchise, since objections had been raised against it he would not recommend it to the House. "A very great error has prevailed," said Mr. Disraeli in defence of this resolution, "as to the meaning which the government associated with this plurality of voting. Our intention was that any person who possessed one of the four new franchises that I have mentioned, if he were an occupier in a borough or if he had a right to vote for a member of parliament, should vote not merely for the occupation qualification, but also for any one other of the new franchises which he might possess. We believe that if that principle were adopted, it might have led to results very satisfactory to large numbers of the people of this country; but we are bound to state frankly that this is not a view of the case which, if we are permitted to bring in a bill, we shall at all insist upon. It seems to us that it is not desirable to make any proposition on these questions which we have not a fair prospect of carrying to a successful issue; and therefore, although I myself believe that it is a principle well worthy of our consideration, for it involves nothing invidious in its character, applying alike to all classes, yet it is not one which I am now in any way recommending to the House, or announcing that we should act upon if we had permission to bring in a bill."

Since parliament, continued Mr. Disraeli, had committed itself to the principle that rating should be the basis of the occupation franchise, he had adopted that principle; and he proposed a £6 rating franchise

for boroughs, which he estimated would give an addition of 130,000 voters. He also suggested that the four new franchises should be extended to the counties, and that the occupation franchise in counties should be reduced from £50 to £20; these different franchises would add 82,500 to the county electors. Thus, by this measure, there would be in round numbers an addition to the constituencies of 400,000 votes.

The manner in which the remaining resolutions were to be treated can be briefly dealt with. Yarmouth, Lancaster, Reigate, and Totnes were to be disfranchised, and twenty-three boroughs with less than 7000 inhabitants were to have one member each. Of the thirty seats thus at the disposal of the House, Mr. Disraeli proposed to allocate fourteen to new boroughs in the northern and midland districts, fifteen to counties, and one to the London University. The new parliamentary boroughs were Hartlepool, Darlington, Burnley, Staley-bridge, St. Helens, Dewsbury, Barnsley, Middlesbrough, one town in the Black Country, Croydon, Gravesend, and Torquay. The second division of the Tower Hamlets was to return two members. The following county divisions were to have two additional members each—North Lancashire, North Lincolnshire, West Kent, East Surrey, Middlesex, South Staffordshire, and South Devon. South Lancashire was to be divided, and to have one additional member.

"I have now fulfilled my task," concluded Mr. Disraeli. "I told hon. members who made inquiries since the time when the resolutions were laid on the table that I had taken a note of them, and that at the proper time I would explain to the House the application which the government recommend should be given to the principles expressed in the resolutions. I trust that the House will candidly consider the observations I have made. It will be our duty on the passing of the resolutions to introduce a bill, and I think that its provisions are such as will on the whole satisfy public opinion and the requirements of the case.

It will add something like one-third to the constituency, and cause a considerable addition to the number of voters belonging to the working classes. I hope, therefore, it will be fairly considered that they have resumed their ancient position in the parliamentary scheme of this country. At any rate, Her Majesty's government have brought forward, I will not call it an honest bill, because that epithet has been used so often of late that it might lead to angry recrimination; but they have brought forward a sincere bill, which they are prepared to carry. Moderate it may be in spirit, but essentially practical, and which I earnestly hope will be backed by the good feeling of an united people."

Such were the chief features of this measure, which from the haste with which, as it afterwards transpired, it had been prepared was nicknamed "the Ten Minutes Bill."

The proposals which the chancellor of the exchequer had laid before the House failed to throw oil upon the troubled waters. The bill was hotly objected to by the leading members of the Opposition. Mr. Lowe, who immediately succeeded Mr. Disraeli, complained that the resolutions of the government had no more to do with the plan of the government than Squire Thornhill's three famous postulates had to do with the argument he had with Moses Primrose when, in order to controvert the right of the clergy to tithes, he laid down the principles that a whole is greater than its part, that whatever is is, and that three angles of a triangle are equal to two right angles. In the first place, he said, they had a speech which told them nothing; then they had resolutions which told them little more than nothing; then they had the reasons, which came afterwards instead of before, why the resolutions were proposed instead of the bill. And what, he asked, were these wonderful resolutions? They were mere hungry and empty abstractions which gave no definite idea whatever; they were simply abstract propositions which could neither be



said to be true nor false, and only derived meaning when applied to the details of the thing with which they had to deal, which was not abstract, but concrete. What the House wanted was a real and definite scheme, and not mere general principles which a philosophical mind might extract from the details of a measure. The resolutions were no framework at all, but an elastic band which would hold whatever was put into it. Between the proposals and the resolutions there was no connection. One of the proposals in the new bill was that the franchise in towns should be reduced to a £6 rating qualification—a proposal which at once disposed of the first four of the resolutions! "Let us," cried Mr. Lowe, amid strong expressions of approval in the House, "bid a long adieu to shams and pretences. Let us deal with the matter frankly. Let us call upon the government to withdraw their resolutions, to introduce a bill, and to bring the matter to an issue fairly and plainly in the old English fashion, and deal with it in our own downright way. There is no danger, there is every safety, in such a proceeding. But there is enormous danger in throwing the question loose before the House. Every member will be urged by his constituency, and we shall be hounded on by a portion of the press, who will point out one member after another who seems to hang back in the race for bringing down the institutions of this country as speedily as possible to the level of democracy. Therefore I appeal to you to act boldly and decidedly. Touch the nettle with timid hand, it stings you and you drop it; grasp it firmly, you are unhurt and tear it up by the roots."

Mr. Bright was of the same opinion. The resolutions should be at once withdrawn, since to discuss them would be waste of time. Nothing, he said, had tended so much to Americanize the House of Commons as the proposals which the government had just made, yet the chancellor of the exchequer was ever vaunting the

superiority of Westminster over Washington. What took place at Washington? The heads of departments, under the president, did not make their appearance in the House of Representatives or even in the Senate. Those two assemblies discussed any measures they liked; they passed any measures they liked, and it was not necessary that they should consult the president or his ministers. So here. Ministers were to sit on the Treasury bench doing nothing, proposing nothing, while the chancellor of the exchequer was to stand at the counter in a decorous garb, as if he were at Swan & Edgar's, and ask whether there is "anything more, gentlemen, you would like?" Could there be anything more crude than the resolutions? Would the proposals they had listened to settle, or do anything to settle, the question of reform? It was assumed that the House was unanimous for something, and would have a reform bill; but there was an essential difference, and a perilous one, between a reform bill and a reform.

Mr. Gladstone did not agree with many of the calculations that the chancellor of the exchequer had arrived at. He contended that the lateral franchises would not touch the labouring classes at all, and as the £6 rating franchise would not admit more than 100,000 voters the Conservative measure was less satisfactory than the bill he himself had introduced last year, which had proposed to admit 200,000 of the working classes. He was of opinion that the resolutions should be withdrawn, and he pointed to the concurrence of two such opposite spirits as Mr. Lowe and Mr. Bright as a significant indication of the feeling of the House on the subject.

There could be no two opinions as to the almost general wish on the Opposition benches that the resolutions should be withdrawn. The Conservative view of the case, however, as impressed upon the party by their leader, was that the question of reform should be definitely settled, and that they should proceed in such a manner

as would enable the House to come to an agreement on the subject. The resolutions, it was asserted, were not crude and fragmentary, since they embraced all the points which had been so frequently discussed. If the House would co-operate with the government in considering the resolutions, ministers would be furnished with starting-points for the settlement of the question. What had happened in the past? Within a period of fifteen years the country had listened to six different bills on the subject of reform, and yet the only two points upon which a conclusion had been arrived at were the rating qualification in boroughs and the county franchise. To proceed by resolution was therefore, argued the Conservatives, the wiser course. Every resolution which passed would embody a principle which would form a good foundation for further proceedings. It would be of great advantage to both sides of the House, to have an opportunity of discussing in detail the principles upon which it was proposed to legislate. The government had no intention of abandoning their executive functions, for they would stand or fall by those principles which they believed to be just and vital, and therefore essential to the proper working of the constitution. The only difference would be, that in one case the government would be in the position of a judge acting on his own interpretation, and in the other of a judge aided by a jury.

Still the Opposition failed to perceive the advantages of this arrangement. To proceed by resolutions, they declared, was not a position proper to ministers of the crown. The government should bring forward their proposals in a bill, which parliament could accept or reject as it thought proper. That was the constitutional mode of acting, whilst the tentative process of ascertaining what would pass the House in order that it might be introduced in a bill, was a humiliating abrogation of the duties and responsibilities of the executive. At first Mr. Disraeli, in spite of the cries of "Withdraw" with which he was greeted by the Opposition when he

rose to reply, declined to abandon his original intention. He would proceed, he said, by the resolutions, and not by a bill. The agreement between Mr. Bright and Mr. Lowe was no doubt very striking, but there was one thing perfectly evident, and that was that both these gentlemen were very anxious that the proposed bill should *not* pass—they were in harmony so far that the Conservative measure was not to be a successful one. He would, continued Mr. Disraeli, of course not insist upon any resolution that would lead to mere idle controversy; but many of the resolutions were really of a very important character, and he desired to have a distinct opinion of the House upon them. As the debate was about to be adjourned he would, however, in the interim see what resolutions could be withdrawn.

No statesman was a more finished tactician than Mr. Disraeli, and careful reflection soon convinced him that it would be unwise, in face of the marked hostility of the Opposition, to carry out his plan of proceeding by resolutions. He resolved, therefore, to abandon the scheme which had so strongly roused the ire of the Liberals, and introduce a bill. The next day (February 26, 1867) he went down to the House, and amid general cheering announced the decision the government had arrived at. "I do not wish," he said, "to put a severe interpretation upon anything which has been said by gentlemen in the course of our debates; but from the spirit of courtesy that has been exhibited by the House, I think it right to take the earliest opportunity of saying that Her Majesty's government, considering all that occurred in the House yesterday, and with a feeling on their part still that their mode of procedure would be extremely advantageous for the advancement of the question, and every day more and more convinces them of the propriety of the course they took—I say Her Majesty's government are of opinion that they should best promote the course of public business and their own object in

dealing with this question in not asking the House to proceed any further with the consideration of those resolutions, but to allow me on the earliest practicable opportunity to introduce a bill." He hoped in the first week of the ensuing month to be prepared to lay before the House the measure of the government.

An unexpected event was, however, now to interfere with this arrangement. As in 1859 there had been differences in the cabinet concerning the reform measures about to be introduced, which had led to the resignation of Mr. Walpole and Mr. Henley; so now in 1867 dissensions arose upon the same subject, and the Earl of Carnarvon, Lord Cranbourne, and General Peel felt themselves compelled, owing to the opinions they held upon the question of reform, to tender their seals of office and separate themselves from the Conservative cabinet. Their places were at once filled by Sir Stafford Northcote, who succeeded Lord Cranbourne at the India office; by the transfer of Sir John Pakington from the admiralty to the war department; and by the Duke of Buckingham replacing the Earl of Carnarvon at the colonial office. At the same time Mr. Corry succeeded Sir John Pakington at the admiralty, and the Duke of Richmond became president of the board of trade.

This secession naturally led to a series of explanations. The first to touch upon the disclosures which subsequently followed was Sir John Pakington, who on his re-election at Droitwich informed his constituents, with a frankness somewhat unusual in a cabinet minister, of the circumstances which had occasioned the ministerial embarrassment. It was owing to these revelations that the measure in support of the resolutions introduced by Mr. Disraeli had been called "the Ten Minutes Bill." They all knew, said Sir John, that it was on February 23rd that the cabinet council had decided upon the reform bill which was to be proposed to parliament. Two days after that decision had been arrived at,

the chancellor of the exchequer was to explain the bill to the House of Commons. That day was a Monday. On the Saturday before the cabinet, apparently unanimous, had separated, and Lord Derby had hastened to Windsor to lay before the queen the details of the reform bill. Early on Monday morning an urgent message was sent to the ministers to attend at the house of Lord Derby on important business. No such summons had been anticipated, and consequently it was with difficulty that ministers were found; it was, therefore, nearly half past one before they all met. The council was then informed that Lord Cranbourne and Lord Carnarvon had seceded, objecting to the details of the bill, which they all thought had been unanimously adopted on the Saturday. Here was a pretty business! It was now two o'clock; at half-past two Lord Derby had to address the whole Conservative party in Downing Street, and at half-past four Mr. Disraeli was to unfold the reform scheme before the House of Commons! Literally the cabinet had not more than *ten minutes* to make up their minds as to what course to adopt. The public knew the rest. Ministers determined to propose, not the bill agreed to on the Saturday, but an alternative measure which had been contemplated in the event of their large and liberal scheme being rejected by the House of Commons. It was very easy to be wise after the event. Ministers had been told that the course they had taken was vacillating, and considered chiefly with a view of keeping the cabinet together. Perhaps if ministers had possessed more time for consideration they might have adopted another course; but they had not: they were driven to decide upon a line of definite action within the limits of little more than ten minutes. If the cabinet had made a mistake, and he would not say that they had not, in discarding their original scheme, he would ask their censors to consider what they themselves would have done under the circumstances. The only honourable course, continued Sir John, open

to a minister who had made a mistake was to retrace his steps. He frankly owned that the government had been in error in yielding to colleagues who differed from them. He himself had deeply felt that as a minister he had been committed to a false position, in allowing a measure to be brought before parliament which he did not consider the best one available. The ministry of Lord Derby, however, had now taken the manly course and had retraced their steps. They felt that, however painful the act might be, they must part with those colleagues who took a less liberal view of the reform question than did the majority of the cabinet, and they had determined to bring in the measure which they had previously intended and previously matured.

This frankness was imitated by Lord Derby. On meeting his peers after this division among his followers, he said he would state without reserve or concealment the present position of the government, and the circumstances which had led to it.

"When I took office," he said, "I did so practically unpledged on the subject of reform. An agreement, however, was soon come to between my colleagues and myself, that it was impossible altogether to ignore that question; but we felt that the only mode of bringing it to a successful issue was to invite the House of Commons to consider what compromise would be acceptable to all parties; and with that view it was determined to proceed by resolutions. Unfortunately the House of Commons did not think fit to adopt that mode of proceeding, and the government was consequently deprived of a great advantage, being unable to collect the general feeling and desire of the House on the main points. Two schemes were originally brought under the consideration of the government, and both differed as to the amount and extent of the franchise. The more extensive of the two schemes was that to which the resolutions had originally pointed, and more especially the fifth, under which would have been introduced the system of plurality of votes, which might

allow us to extend the franchise lower than we otherwise would. One distinguished member of the cabinet entertained strong objections to the course pursued, but in order to secure unanimity waived those objections. I then hoped that the larger and more comprehensive scheme would have been fixed on; but, to my surprise and regret, I found that two of my most valued colleagues, on reconsideration, disapproved of the scheme, and felt compelled to withdraw the assent they had given to it. Of course I at once relieved the third colleague from the assent he had given; and it then became necessary for the government to consider what course they would adopt. Ultimately we determined to submit to the House of Commons a measure which we did not consider thoroughly satisfactory, but which we hoped might for a time settle the question. But it very shortly became obvious that on neither side of the House would the proposition of the government meet with a concurrence, and therefore it became necessary last week to consider whether we should adhere to our second proposition or revert to the first. We resolved on taking the latter course. Our scheme will in a short time be laid before the other House of parliament."

The objections of the three members who had felt it their duty to desert the cabinet were now laid before parliament. All three of the ex-statesmen avowed their fears that the measure about to be introduced would be too democratic in its character, and thus endanger the stability of the constitution. The clause as to household suffrage, modified by certain compensations, had been the stumbling-block which none of them could get over. "The measure," said Lord Carnarvon, and he represented the feelings of many of the Conservative party on the occasion, "ought not to be a one-sided one; and while we admitted a full proportion of the working classes, we should not admit them in such proportions and under such conditions as would place them in absolute pre-eminence

and control over all other constituents. I shrink from a class government of whatever kind; I shrink from the dead uniformity of any one class, or interest, or opinion; I shrink from sweeping away all intervening barriers, and reducing the complicated system of English constituencies to two clearly defined and perhaps ultimately hostile classes—a rich upper class on the one hand, and a poor artisan class on the other. . . . I do not want to go into details; but I saw great reason to fear that the results of the measure would effect an enormous transfer of political power, and alter the character of five-sixths of the boroughs of this country—that the principles might be good in theory, but the compensation in practice was illusory. I felt that I could not be a party to a change of so very great and extensive a character.”

Both General Peel and Lord Cranbourne expressed similar sentiments. “It was not,” said General Peel, “until the fifth resolution was proposed—that fatal fifth resolution—by which it was proposed to extend the franchise down to household suffrage, that I found myself unable to agree with my colleagues, and I then and there tendered my resignation. I objected to it, in the first place, on the ground that it could not be carried out in conformity with the fourth resolution, which said that no class should have a predominant influence in the representation. I also objected to it because I thought that in many instances it would entirely overwhelm and swamp the old constituency, especially in small boroughs. . . . I therefore refused to take any share in the responsibility of the measure.” He had no faith, continued the ex-war-secretary, in the compensations with which household suffrage was to be accompanied, for forty years’ parliamentary experience had convinced him that a security as a security was worth nothing; but being assured by his colleagues that the measure was conservative, and knowing that no settlement could ever be carried without some mutual sacrifice of opinion, he

had yielded at first, until he discovered that both Lord Carnarvon and Lord Cranbourne had independently, by an examination of the figures, come to the same conclusion as himself—that the proposal would swamp the present constituency in small boroughs; then he had no alternative but to tender his resignation. Lord Cranbourne entered upon an explanation to the same effect.

The result of the recent changes was given to the House by Mr. Disraeli (March 5, 1867) at some length. He stated that the government had originally contemplated a measure different from that which he was then explaining, but which they had felt themselves obliged to relinquish. They would, however, now return to their original policy. He vindicated the government from the charge that they had neglected for a long period the consideration of the important subject which now so much engaged the attention of parliament, and that it had been taken up by them without sufficient thought, with indifference, and after a delay characterized probably by negligence.

“Now, sir,” he said, “there is no foundation for that charge. Early in the autumn Lord Derby wrote to me and told me that, after grave deliberation, he had arrived at the conclusion that it was absolutely necessary to deal with the question of parliamentary reform, and that it must be dealt with in no niggard spirit. That communication was made to me by Lord Derby early in the autumn, and he requested me to give my best attention to the subject. I do not say that Lord Derby, charged with the responsibility of state affairs, and anxious, if possible, to bring to a happy solution one of the most difficult problems of modern politics—I do not say that the feeling or even the conduct of Lord Derby, in the interval between the time when he made that communication to me and the first meeting of the cabinet, was not modified, as the conduct of every public man must be modified, by the circumstances of the time, by the temper of the nation, by observation of general or particular opinions,

by acquaintance with the obstacles which he should have to encounter, and the various combinations which it might be necessary to enter into to obtain the end which he desired. He must, indeed, be constituted differently from other statesmen if his course were not modified, even sometimes arrested, by such circumstances. But this I will say of Lord Derby, that what was his first opinion early in the autumn is his last opinion, and it is one upon which he is prepared to act. Sir, we had more than the hope, we had the expectation, that we should have been able to propose to the House a measure conceived in the spirit which had influenced Lord Derby when he made that communication to me in the autumn, and sanctioned and supported by all his colleagues. After having entertained, however, an expectation of that character, we were unhappily, and I must say unexpectedly, disappointed in that hope.

"Sir, I impugn no man's conduct under these circumstances. I am confident, for my own part, that every member of the cabinet of Lord Derby, whatever his opinion on the subject or whatever the course he may have taken, acted only in duty and in honour. That, however, being the case, called upon somewhat unexpectedly to arrive at a decision, and feeling that he had entered into an engagement with his sovereign and with his country to bring this question, if possible, to a solution, Lord Derby sanctioned the measure which on the 25th of last month I brought before the House. Upon that measure I shall make one remark. "The House," said Mr. Disraeli, throwing a new light upon the statement of Sir John Pakington, "must not think, because we were unable to carry into effect the more considerable measure which we had planned, that we had recourse to a scheme which we had only suddenly adopted. The measure I proposed on the 25th of February was one which had engaged our attention, and especially the attention—the mature attention—of Lord Derby. We had always

been of opinion that if, unfortunately, we should not be justified in introducing the measure which we wished, that was the one which ought to be brought forward, because it could be defended upon principle. I speak of it with impartiality, because it is not and need not now be concealed that it was not the one which I myself should have preferred; but it is one in my opinion which I could consistently and honourably recommend to the House, because it is founded upon a principle, and between that measure and the policy which Lord Derby would have preferred there is in our belief no other course possible.

"The principle upon which the measure which I described on the 25th of February is founded is this—it seeks to restore, and would restore, the labouring classes to that place in our parliamentary system which they forfeited by the Act of 1832. If, for example, it had been carried, the constituency of England would have consisted probably, allowing for double votes, of 1,400,000 persons, and the labouring classes would have possessed of that constituency exactly one quarter. Then, take the great landed proprietors and the various classes in connection with them, and give another quarter to them, and the moiety of the constituency between those two sections would have been left to the various sections of the middle class. That, therefore, was a policy which was founded on a principle, for it would have offered to the country a constituency which bore in its various classes a due and harmonious relation to each other, and which, adapted no doubt to different places and to different circumstances, would have placed the working class in the position from which they were expelled in 1832. That was a measure, moreover, which we had reason to believe might have been accepted by parliament. It was brought forward by a united cabinet, and we entertained an expectation that there were many influential gentlemen opposite who would have accepted it.

"But what was the fact? I must say this, though individually I was not surprised at the result, that it did not give satisfaction to the great Conservative party of the country. I am not speaking merely of those influential gentlemen who have the honour of representing the Conservative party in this House, though I have reason to believe that they entirely represent the feeling of the country in this respect; but I may say this, that not a day elapsed after the measure was brought under the consideration of the House without persons of the highest authority in the country, men of the greatest stake and standing who are distinguished by what are called Conservative opinions, expressing their regret that this measure had been adopted, and that the course which Lord Derby was supposed to uphold—and which, indeed, he had, without circumlocution, taken the opportunity of intimating to his followers his wish to support—had not been pursued. Sir, there was a general feeling throughout the country, or at least, through the most important members and communities connected with the Conservative party, that the question of the introduction of the working classes into our parliamentary system should not be dealt with in a contracted spirit.

"Then, sir, how did that proposition fare with gentlemen opposite, on whose support in some degree we had hoped we might have counted? Why, the very next day, the right hon. gentleman the member for Lancashire called his friends together—very properly, for I do not condemn his conduct or the decision at which they arrived—and after consultation they came to the conclusion that the proposition was unsatisfactory, and that no settlement could be satisfactory unless it were based on a £5 rating.\* (*Cries of "No, no!" from the*

*Opposition.*) That, at all events, was the information which reached us. Probably it was not accurate, and much of the information that reaches you about us is equally unauthentic. I think, however, it will not be disputed that our proposal was not popular with the Liberal party, and that, in fact, some counter-proposition was to be made. It seemed to us, therefore, that we were fast sinking into that unsatisfactory state which distinguished last session, when one proposition was met by another not materially differing from it, and that the attempt to bring this great question to a solution would have been fruitless in the present as it had been in preceding sessions. But, sir, we are conscious that there is some difference between this and the preceding session; and we did believe and hold that if the question were not seriously and earnestly and vigorously grappled with, it would not be for the honour of parliament or the advantage of the country.

"Well, sir, under these circumstances, Lord Derby called his colleagues together, and wished them to reconsider the course which had been pursued, and the course which he had formerly and originally wished to pursue. And he expressed his strong opinion, that the course which he originally wished to pursue was the only one that would lead to a solution which would be satisfactory to the country and enable parliament to agree to a measure, and would, on the whole, be most conducive to the interests of the country, present and future. I regret to say that under these circumstances, although a majority of the cabinet supported Lord Derby, we had the great misfortune of losing three of our colleagues.

"Sir, I know there may be some in this House who think that the circumstance of losing colleagues, although it may be a disagreeable incident, is one which, like many of the casualties of life, must be encountered and endured. Some, indeed, think that the breaking up of a cabinet is like the breaking up of a social meeting, and that these

\* On February 26 a meeting of the Liberal members had been held at Mr. Gladstone's house, at which it was decided to set aside the resolutions, and to urge the government to bring in a bill at once. By the spontaneous action of the government the necessity for adopting this course was superseded.

things are easily forgotten and passed over. But I see some right hon. gentlemen opposite who have had the misfortune of parting with colleagues, and I think they will agree with me that the disruption of that tie, that separation from men with whom you have long been bound by a tie of the most intense interest—that of attempting to manage the affairs of a great country in the hope that you may be contributing to the public welfare—is one of the saddest and most painful incidents that can occur. I rank it among the calamities of life. If my resignation of office could have prevented that unfortunate result, that resignation was at the command of my noble friend. It was at his command then, as it has always been. And whether I have sat on that side of the House or on this, those who know me know that I have always said that no personal sacrifice on my part should I hesitate to make to maintain a united party or a united cabinet. But the state of affairs would not have been bettered by my retiring from office. We lost colleagues with whom it was a pride and pleasure to act; and my own consolation under the circumstances is, that I feel certain the services of such men, whatever may become of myself, will not be lost to their country. And there is one among them whose commanding talents, whose clear intelligence, capacity for labour, and power of expression will always, I am sure, qualify him for taking a leading part in the affairs of this country.

"But, sir, it is unnecessary, as I am sure it must be painful, to touch upon these personal questions. The spirit of honour and the sense of duty will maintain us, I hope, in the trial which we are now undergoing. Lord Derby, had he quitted office, would only have increased the embarrassment which public men now feel. He retains office with the most earnest determination to carry into effect the policy which he approves. I hope that, without entering into any unnecessary details, which might afford amusement to the curious, but

which feeling this House has at all times repudiated, it will be thought that I have fairly placed before the House the position in which the cabinet is placed. It is our business now to bring forward as soon as we possibly can the measure of parliamentary reform which, after such difficulties and such sacrifices, it will be my duty to introduce to the House. Sir, the House need not fear that there will be any evasion, any equivocation, any vacillation, or any hesitation in that measure. That measure will be brought forward as the definitive opinion of the cabinet, and by that definitive opinion they will stand."

Some excitement was now created amid a certain section of the Opposition as to the meaning implied in the words reverting to "our original policy." Did they mean that a Conservative government was about to introduce a democratic reform bill? If so, it was inquired, how could such inconsistency be defended? In 1859 the present cabinet changed their opinions and brought in a reform bill, for up to that date, it was alleged, they had been anti-reformers. But on abandoning office they also abandoned their conversion to reform; and it was only after an interval of nine years, when the Conservative party returned to the Treasury bench, that they again became interested in the subject, and the country saw a second conversion. Such conduct was politically wrong and morally indefensible. No party could hold itself free, and then the moment it found itself in office turn round upon the opinions it had persistently maintained in opposition. The examples, so often relied upon, of the Duke of Wellington and Sir Robert Peel, confirmed rather than shook this view of matters. The Duke of Wellington, the most popular and powerful man of his time, having carried Catholic emancipation, was driven from office, which he never resumed; his influence was lost, and for a time his party was shattered. Then, thanks to Sir Robert Peel, the party were re-united and re-seated in power. Soon afterwards free trade was



brought forward, and once more the leaders were driven from office and the party broken up. Still there was this great difference between those statesmen and the present: both the duke and Sir Robert were sincerely converted, and commanded great parliamentary majorities. But the present government were in a confessed minority in the House of Commons; and driven from office in 1859, they changed their opinions and opposed the bill of 1860. The Conservatives were now in power and reconverted; yet what proof, it was asked, had parliament that the second conversion was a whit more sincere than the first? especially since the new conviction had been promulgated that reform was not a question which should decide the fate of governments; and the present cabinet had given a choice of measures with perfect indifference as to which should be accepted—acting more like auctioneers than ministers, and knocking down the constitution to the loudest bidder? What was this “original policy?” It was a policy which, if there were any truth in language, there was not a member of the cabinet who did not a year ago condemn as a policy of revolution. And now it was to be introduced by the Conservative party! Thus argued a few of the more malicious of the Liberal party.

On the other hand, the Radical section were not opposed to the action of the cabinet, and saw no inconsistency in the proceedings of ministers. Reform, they said, was a necessity; and had Lord Derby met parliament and declared that he had no measure of reform to offer, and would resist all proposals for the extension of the franchise, the first week of the session would have been to him and his government a week of extermination. Lord Derby saw that grievances must be redressed, and was therefore in favour of a wide extension of the suffrage. What objection was there to that course? Household suffrage was in boroughs the true basis of the franchise.

The people of the country had been taught to dread a large increase in the number of votes at elections. Why? Because they entertained some sort of idea that the things which were safe in the hands of one million would be unsafe in the hands of two millions—as if, asked the Radicals indignantly, the second million of their countrymen would not be filled with the same ideas as the first million, and would not have the same interest in the well-being of the country? Every one desired to have the question of reform settled; and if the government would introduce a liberal and generous measure, it would not be opposed simply because it was brought forward by a Conservative cabinet.

The scheme of the government led to many enthusiastic hopes and anxious fears. Many of the Radicals fell under the impression that since the Conservative government had resolved to deal with the question of reform, the measure about to be introduced—on the principle of “dishing the Whigs”—would be far more wide and extensive than could have been expected, had “the educated section of the Liberal party” been intrusted with framing the details of the bill; consequently these gentry were very jubilant. On the other hand, several of the more old-fashioned Conservatives were in terror lest the measure should be based upon the suggestions raised by agitators out of doors, and the “leap in the dark” land them in the quagmire of socialism, to the sinking of rank, property, and education by the sheer force of numbers. These fears were removed and these hopes depressed by a few words of sound common sense from the then Lord Stanley. “Right hon. gentlemen,” said he, alluding to certain observations given forth by Mr. Horsman and Mr. Lowe as to the Radical tendencies of the Conservative government, “have spoken as if it were the intention of those who sat upon these benches to go in a more democratic direction than even gentlemen opposite would be inclined to

take, and to bring in a bill which would reduce the franchise to an excessive extent. I say plainly and frankly that I can conceive no circumstances which would render the adoption of such a course by us in our position either expedient or honourable, even were any who sit on these benches prepared to follow it. I say this distinctly, because I wish to save some hon. members

on that side of the House disappointment. If the hon. member for Calne [Mr. Lowe], or any of those who sit near him, believe seriously that it is the intention of the government to bring in a bill which shall be in accordance with the view which has always been so ably and so consistently advocated by the hon. member for Birmingham, they are greatly mistaken."

## CHAPTER III.

### THE REFORM BILL.

THE curiosity of the country as to the "original policy" of the government had not long to wait before it was fully gratified. A fortnight after the ministerial explanations with regard to the divisions in the cabinet had been made public, Mr. Disraeli again rose before a crowded and excited House (March 18, 1867) to ask leave to introduce a bill "further to amend the law for regulating the representation of the people in parliament." His speech on the occasion was clear and exhaustive, but adorned with few of those passages of eloquence which generally render his parliamentary oratory so eminently readable. The principles of political representation, he began, had of late years been so profoundly and so extensively discussed and investigated that it was scarcely necessary on this occasion for him to advert to them. He proposed, therefore, to confine his observations to two points. He would endeavour, in the first place, clearly to convey to the House the object of the government in the bill; and secondly, he would detail the means by which that purpose, in their opinion, could be accomplished. It would be for the House, first, to decide whether that object was desirable; and secondly, if desirable, whether the means which he proposed were adequate.

In the first place, his object was, not only to maintain, but to strengthen the character and functions of that House. They were peculiar in any popular assembly; not only rare, but perhaps unexampled in any other which had existed. The House of Commons had combined national representation with the attributes of a senate. That peculiar union had been owing to the variety of elements of

which it was formed. Its variety of character had given to it its deliberative power, and it owed to its deliberative power its general authority. He wished, not only to maintain, but to strengthen that character and those functions; and he believed that, in the present age and under the existing circumstances of the country, the best way to do so was to establish them on a broad popular basis. He knew that there were some persons in whose minds the epithet which he had just used might create a feeling of distrust, but he attributed the sentiment of alarm which was associated with it to a misapprehension of its meaning, and to that perplexity of ideas which too often confounded popular privileges with democratic rights. They were not identical. They were not similar; more than that, they were contrary. Popular privileges were consistent with a state of society in which there was great inequality of condition. Democratic rights, on the contrary, demanded that there should be equality of condition as the fundamental basis of the society which they regulated.

Now that was, he thought, a distinction which ought to be borne in mind by the House in dealing with the provisions of the bill which he was about to ask leave to introduce. If that bill were a proposal that Her Majesty should be enabled to concede to her subjects, with the advice and concurrence of her parliament, a liberal measure of popular privileges, then there might be many of its provisions which would be regarded as prudent, wise, and essentially constitutional. If, on the other hand, it were looked upon as a measure having for its object to confer democratic rights, then he admitted much that it might contain

might be viewed in the light of being indefensible and unjust. They did not, however, live under a democracy, and the propositions which he was about to make certainly had no tendency in that direction.

Generally speaking, and looking to what had occurred since the Reform Act of 1832 was passed, to the increase of population, the progress of industry, the spread of knowledge, and the ingenuity of the country in art, he was of opinion that numbers, thoughts, and feelings had since that time been created which it was desirable should be admitted within the circle of the constitution. He wished that admission to take place in the spirit of their existing institutions, and with abated due deference to the traditions of an ancient state. In dealing with the question of the distribution of power in such a state—which was really the question before them—he would, in the first place, call the attention of the House to that part of it which was perhaps the most important, and which certainly to the greatest extent commanded the interest of the public. He alluded to the franchise, and especially that which should prevail in towns. He would ask the House at the outset to consider the principles upon which the occupation franchise in boroughs ought to rest, and upon which it was expedient to base it. In 1832 the borough franchise was founded on the principle of *value*. Those who paid £10 for the house in which they lived, subject to certain regulations as regarded rates and residence, had the borough franchise conferred upon them. He believed that franchise might be fairly considered as having been an efficient and satisfactory franchise, and as having in its generation operated with advantage to the country. His own opinion from the commencement had always been, that seed was sown in that arrangement which would necessarily in the course of time lead to some disturbance. That was, however, a question of controversy, and he would not indulge in controversy at that moment. It was, nevertheless, a historic

fact that only twenty years after the passing of the great measure of 1832 the principal, or at least one of the principal authors of that measure [Lord John Russell] announced that the arrangement which had been entered into, especially with respect to the borough franchise, was no longer satisfactory, and invited the House to consider a new arrangement which might command a more complete assent. That was a fact which could not be denied. The proposition which was made at the period to which he referred, in order to allay discontent and meet the requirements of the time, by the statesman who, upon the whole, had taken nearly the most prominent part in the passing of the Act of 1832, involved a diminution of the value on which the borough franchise was established. That proposition was received with no satisfaction, and from that period up to the present—and fifteen years had since elapsed—the question had more or less engaged public attention, and had been taken up by public men who had brought forward various schemes with a view to the solution of the difficulties by which it was surrounded. All those schemes had in their turn proved to be unsatisfactory, and all had been unsuccessful; but every one of them had been distinguished by one characteristic, that the only remedy proposed was a diminution in some form or another, or in some degree or another, of the value on which the borough franchise had been based in 1832.

The House would easily recall to its recollection the combination of figures which had been submitted to the notice of parliament on that subject. They had before them £8 and £7 rating or rental, £6 in every form, and they now heard of other figures. No proposition, however, which had as yet been put forward had given satisfaction, because the country, and the House reflecting the feeling of the country, had felt that by none of the changes suggested was a settlement of the question likely to be insured. In 1866 a bill had been introduced with the same object as

that which he had risen to ask for leave to bring in—namely, to amend the law for the representation of the people in parliament. That bill was avowedly not founded on a principle; it was avowedly founded, as far as he could understand, on expediency. Mr. Gladstone, who was its powerful advocate in the House, distinctly laid it down in the course of his argument on the subject that it was necessary there should be an admission of the working classes into the constituencies; that in accordance with a figure which he had fixed upon, he calculated that a certain portion of them would be admitted, but that if another figure were adopted which he named, he thought the number admitted would be excessive, and he therefore recommended the first figure as that which, upon the whole, would furnish the best and safest solution of the difficulty. The proposal of Mr. Gladstone, therefore, involved no principle. It might have been an appropriate arrangement, but it was essentially an expedient.

The House knew what took place during the long discussions in which they were engaged last year. It was generally felt that the proposal of the late government afforded no prospect of a satisfactory settlement of the question. A very considerable amount of time had been employed last session in a very unsatisfactory manner until at length the House took the matter into its own hands, and in one of the largest divisions which ever occurred, asserted a principle with regard to the borough franchise which was carried by a majority. That principle was that the borough franchise should be founded on *rating*.

"The House will admit," continued Mr. Disraeli, "that the statement I have made is fair and accurate. No one questions for a moment that the government fully realized the importance of that decision. Of course, if they had not acknowledged its importance they would not have retired from a position of power; but they felt that the decision at which the House of Commons had arrived was one opposed

to the whole policy which they had pursued during the session. I do not say that every gentleman on both sides of the House who contributed to that division—I do not say that every one in a division which numbered above 600 members—had narrowly investigated and pursued to the last consequences all that must follow from the assertion and adoption of that principle; but it happened, as happens in all popular assemblies, that a great decision was arrived at by the unerring instinct of the House. The House felt that for the last fifteen years this question of the borough franchise had not been treated in a satisfactory manner by any government which had attempted to deal with it, and that the time had come when some principle should be laid down in a distinct and decided manner for the guidance of those who might have to offer propositions to the House on the subject.

"I take it for granted that if ever there was a decision of the House of Commons which meant something it was that decision which determined the fate of the Ministry; and if anything ever had the character of authority in this House at all, it was the vote arrived at on that occasion. The House, I assume, meant by the decision it arrived at that the person who was to be intrusted with a vote to elect members of parliament should be one with respect to whom there should be *some guarantee and security for the regularity of his life and the general trustworthiness of his conduct*; and the House thought that the fact of a man being rated to the relief of the poor, and being able to pay his rates, gave that fair assurance which the state had a right to require. I take it that vote of the House of Commons meant this:—If you are going to invest men with the exercise of public rights, let that great trust be accompanied with the exercise of public duty. I take it for granted that was what the House of Commons meant. It meant that the being *rated to the poor and the paying of the rates* constituted a fair assurance

that the man who fulfilled those conditions was one likely to be characterized by regularity of life and general trustworthiness of conduct. That is a principle which the House thought ought not to be lost sight of, but should be a *sine quâ non* in the settlement of the borough franchise."

Having therefore, proceeded the speaker, to consider that question, he had accepted as a guide that decision of the House of Commons, placing on it what he deemed to be its real interpretation. He believed that the House had resolved and wished that the borough suffrage should be bound up and united with the duty of paying rates for the maintenance of the poor, and paying them really—that, in fact, a *bonâ fide* rating franchise was what the House of Commons meant by the resolution it adopted. Accepting the decision of the House with that interpretation, he had then to consider how such a proposition could be united with the principle of value, which hitherto had been and still was the law of the country with respect to the borough franchise, and which without exception during all the discussions on the subject for the last fifteen years had been accepted by parliament. The result of that attempt had not been satisfactory. In accepting a real and genuine principle of rating as a basis, he found the moment he had endeavoured to connect it with value disturbing elements, which promised no prospect of solution, and gave no chance of permanency. Therefore, under those circumstances, in the course of consideration he proposed to examine the whole question of occupation in boroughs, and see what would be the effect of the application of the *principle of genuine rating without reference to value*.

"Let me call the attention of the House," he said, "to some figures, which will be in the hands of members immediately and in greater detail. There are in the boroughs of England and Wales 1,367,000 male householders, of whom there are at present qualified to vote 644,000. There would,

therefore, remain unqualified 723,000. In applying the principle of a franchise founded on being rated to the poor, and of personal payment of the rates, we found that out of these 723,000 now disqualified, or rather not qualified for voting under the existing law, we should at once have had to take away 237,000—that is to say, that beneath the £10 line which now qualifies there are 237,000 persons who are rated to the poor, and who pay rates, and who if the law were so changed that value should not be an element would then be qualified to vote for members of parliament. Now, if you add these 237,000 persons who are rated to the poor, and who pay their rates, to the 644,000 who are at present qualified, you will find that there would be 881,000 persons fulfilling the required conditions—that is to say, almost exactly two-thirds of the whole of the householders in the boroughs of England and Wales. There would still remain 486,000 who would not be qualified under these circumstances, because they do not pay rates personally. A great deduction must be made from those 486,000 on account of persons who might claim to pay the rates; but a great amount of those 486,000 persons would still remain without the opportunity of being rated to the poor, because there are certain Acts of parliament, some of a general and some of a local character, by which the landlord compounds for the rates of his tenants, who, in consequence, are called compound householders, and most of these are under the operation of the Act with the details of which every gentleman in the House is familiar—the Small Tenements Act.\* There are fifty-eight boroughs which are entirely under the operation of that Act, and there are ninety-eight boroughs in which certain parishes only are under the operation of the Act.

"In considering the settlement of the franchise for boroughs, and the possibility of attempting to establish it, not on the

\* The Small Tenements Act regards the rating of premises down to the limit of £10.

fluctuating principle of value, which is only a question of degree which may vary, and which we might be called on to change from year to year, it is impossible not to take into view the peculiar position of the compound householders. And the question arises, Ought a compound householder to have a vote? Well, sir, in our opinion, assuming that the House is of the same opinion, that the foundation of the franchise should be rating and a payment of rates, and that that is adopted by the House, not as a check, as some would say, but, on the contrary, as a qualification, and because it is the best evidence of the trustworthiness of the individual, we have no hesitation in saying ourselves that we do not think that the compound householder, as a compound householder, ought to have a vote. But we are far from saying that any person who is a compound householder from the effect of Acts which have been passed for the convenience of vestries, should be deprived of the opportunity of obtaining and enjoying this right which persons in the same sphere of life may have granted to them, and which, for aught we know, these compound householders may be equally competent to possess and to exercise. And therefore we should have to consider whether it might not be possible—in the case of compound householders who are deprived of rating for the moment by Acts to which I have referred, either of a general or local character—whether it might not be possible to give them the opportunity of accepting the public duty, and in consequence the public right, which others in the same sphere of life and influenced in their conduct by the same conditions of existence might possess; and taking this general view of the question, seeing the impossibility of settling it on any principle connected with value, and that it is only by taking the rating principle in its completeness and authenticity that you can get one on which you can rest a perfect settlement, our opinion is, and we shall make that proposition to the House, that

we should establish the franchise in the boroughs on this principle, *that any man who has occupied a house for two years, and been rated to the relief of the poor and pays his rates—every householder under these conditions should enjoy the borough franchise.*

“By that means the 237,000 persons who are now rated, and pay their rates, would, of course, be at once qualified. But with regard to the compound householders, we propose that every facility should be given to them; that they shall be allowed to enter their names upon the rate-book, to fulfil the constitutional condition to which I have adverted, and then they will, of course, succeed to the constitutional right which is connected with it. Sir, if we pursue that course you have your borough franchise fixed upon principle; you know where you are; you know that the power of electing members of parliament must be exercised by men who, by their position in life, have shown that they are qualified for its exercise. And meeting the difficulty of compound householders by the provisions which are in the bill, and which will give them every facility to claim the exercise of the same right on condition of fulfilling the same duty, the whole of the 723,000 householders in the boroughs of England that are at present not qualified to vote for members of parliament will be qualified by the bill I am asking leave to introduce. Nor will there be a man among them who, if he deserves the franchise, may not possess it.”

Mr. Disraeli then criticised the plan popular with some persons, and which was held forth as a more satisfactory settlement of the question than the one he had proposed on the part of the government—that the suffrage should be established on a £5 rating. “Now, sir, I must say,” he continued, “having had very much to consider these questions, I know of no Serbonian bog deeper than a £5 rating would prove to be. Just let the House see how it stands. In the present state of the law, as I shall show to the House, if the interpretation we have placed on the great vote of last year be

a sound one, and if it be not a sound one it proves the House of Commons was trifling with the question—there really is no such thing as a £5 rating—you let in a very large and very indiscriminate number to the enjoyment of the right without the preliminary performance of duties; and when they are let in you leave a great many behind them who, because others are let in, immediately cry out to be admitted. Then where is your settlement? There is no more reason why a £5 rating should give a qualification than one of £4. But then I am told that this great difficulty is to be entirely overcome by a violent change to be effected in the law of England. Nominal £5 raters are to be turned into *bonâ fide* £5 raters by the operation of the law, and no Englishman who pays less than that sum is to enjoy the privilege of voting. All below that line are, in fact, to be taken out of the sphere of self-government, and deprived of the opportunity which the humblest now possess, and would possess under the plan we propose, of performing public duties, and consequently of obtaining public rights. I can imagine no scheme more injurious—I may say more fatal—than a proposition of this kind; and it seems to me that if we were to adopt it manhood suffrage would be the logical and necessary consequence, and that every man who finds that he is in a position in which he may not be permitted to fulfil a constitutional condition which may give him a constitutional right, would naturally fall back into the arms of the lowest agitators, and feel that his only chance of ever obtaining the rights of constitutional citizenship would be by a process which has not hitherto been recognized by any authorities in this country.”

Mr. Disraeli then stated the other franchises which the bill proposed. All persons who paid twenty shillings annually in direct taxation—and by direct taxation he meant the payment of income tax and assessed taxes (but not including licenses of any kind)—should have a vote. “Thus,”

he argued, “we build up the constituency, which would establish the franchise in the boroughs upon two great principles—the payment of direct taxation and the payment of rates. But it has been urged that the enjoyment of this franchise, founded upon the payment of direct taxes, is one which would not be enjoyed as intended in a great degree by the class whose influence, it is said, our proposition may assail; that is to say, that most of them are householders, and therefore they would not enjoy this franchise. Therefore, we meet that objection by proposing that a person who pays twenty shillings direct taxation, and who enjoys the franchise which depends upon the payment of direct taxation, if he is also a householder and pays his rates may exercise his suffrage in respect of both qualifications.” The bill would also give votes to the holders of deposits in the savings-banks, and of funded property to the amount of £50. “Then there is the educational franchise,” continued Mr. Disraeli. “It has been said that if you introduce a suffrage founded upon the payment of direct taxation it would supply means for exercising the vote to those persons who otherwise would have it under the educational franchise. To a certain degree there is truth in that; but having taken some pains to investigate what would be the operation of such a franchise, I am bound to say that there are many persons in whose condition the House would be deeply interested, some of whom would not have any opportunity, either as householders—and this would be peculiarly the case in counties—or as payers of direct taxation, of exercising the suffrage, but who are peculiarly qualified to exercise such a trust. Among others the position of ministers of religion is very remarkable. I am speaking of ministers of all sects. I find men who entirely devote their lives to solace or to elevate the sense of existence, are men who under this franchise would exercise, and I think admirably exercise, a certain degree of political influence, but who, either



as householders or as payers of income tax especially to the amount of twenty shillings, would certainly be debarred from the franchise. I therefore trust that the House will allow these three franchises to pass."

Mr. Disraeli next stated the additions his measure would create in the borough constituency. "I do not think," he said, "that it is our business to act the part of electioneering agents, and to make estimates, always of a most speculative character, of the number of persons who will vote under the plan we propose. That is not our business as ministers in parliament. We are to see who, under the laws of this country, are to have the opportunity of acquiring a vote. And allow me to remind the House of the nature of the arguments which are always used by those who are the promoters of increased suffrage. They are always founded upon the number of the population. But the business of the House of Commons in proposing or in passing laws upon this subject is to ascertain as far as possible the number who will be admitted under the particular measure. They are not to estimate a thing which, after all, can only be done in a speculative manner—the number who may be tempted, in consequence of the passing of the bill, to register their suffrages. Their business is simply to pass those laws which they think will conduce to the welfare or safety of the country. Well, I say that if this bill be carried there is not a man, whether he be a ratepayer paying a rental of less than £10, or a compound householder, who may not qualify himself if he choose. In the new boroughs, to which I will afterwards advert, the estimated number of voters will be 68,000. The number of direct taxpayers who would probably vote in boroughs will be very considerable. The public departments have no means of offering to the House any recent information upon this subject, and it would probably take months to obtain any. Making due allowance, however, for the increased property and assessed taxes—probably at the rate of twenty-three per

cent.—since Mr. Macaulay's returns were made to the House, I should think that the number who would qualify in boroughs would greatly exceed 200,000. The educational franchise would in the boroughs give 35,000 voters, the fundholders' franchise 25,000, and the savings-bank franchise 45,000. You would thus have more than a million of voters who could qualify themselves in the boroughs for the exercise of the franchise. It has been said that they will not choose to avail themselves of that great right. I regret to hear that opinion, but I venture to doubt its correctness. But still, whatever may be our opinion, it is the duty of the House so to deal with this question that those whom they believe to be qualified for the exercise of this privilege shall have that opportunity; and the duty of parliament ceases when that has been accomplished."

Mr. Disraeli then proceeded to consider the question of the county franchise. He proposed that those new suffrages should be extended to the counties; but in consequence of the great difference which prevailed between counties and boroughs he did not propose, under any circumstances, that any person should exercise the privilege of voting twice. Then as to the amount of the occupation in counties. When he last made some observations to the House upon that subject, he stated that the government thought, on the whole, that the county qualification had better be placed at £20 rating. When he made that statement he made it with a feeling on the part of the government that the opinion of the House of Commons ought to be consulted upon the subject, and because, also, they believed that the House had never had the opportunity of arriving at any decided opinion upon the matter. The question had really never been put fairly before the House. When Mr. Locke King and others had come forward with propositions to reduce the occupation for counties to £10, the House had been always asked to consider those propositions in an isolated manner.

Now, he thought, and he believed that the House had been long of the same opinion, that the question ought to be considered in conjunction with those of analogous character, and ought not to be treated in an isolated manner. They depended upon each other, and he looked upon all those attempts to reduce the county franchise as barren of results; and as a proof of the correctness of that opinion, he might also remark that they had been barren of consequences. No one ever felt that a satisfactory settlement would be likely to result from those debates.

"Last year," he continued, "there was an opportunity when the reform bill was before the House—when the mind of the House was accustomed to consider in all its details and in all its ramifications the principles of parliamentary representation—there was, I say, at that time a fair opportunity for discussing this question in a satisfactory manner, and for arriving at a satisfactory settlement. But this subject, always unfortunate, was never more unfortunate than on that occasion, because a great party scene and division took place at the beginning of the evening destined for its discussion. It was brought on in a languid House—in a very thin House. It was decided, I grant, in a very full House, but it was discussed in an unsatisfactory and feeble manner. My opinion is a perfectly impartial one, for I myself took part in the debate. The division was taken in a full House, and the majority was not only a very slight one, but the question was decided upon a principle which the result of the session showed was not the conviction of the House of Commons. Well, if the House of Commons meant anything it meant that *rating* should be the principle of the franchise, and I believe that decision has been received by the country as one of the soundest at which the House of Commons ever arrived. Well, we should have been glad if the question had been calmly and completely discussed, and, at whatever opinion the House of Commons had arrived,

we should have accepted that opinion as a wise and a sound one. In endeavouring, however, to bring forward a complete measure, and as far as we can to offer a definite and definitive position to the consideration of the House, Her Majesty's government gave much attention to this question of the county occupation franchise; and on the whole, they believe that the qualification that would be most advantageous and most satisfactory would be a *£15 rating, and that is the amount at which they are determined to fix it*. That would qualify 171,000 additional householders for the exercise of the franchise. The savings-bank franchise will give 40,000; the fundholders franchise 25,000; and the educational franchise 44,000 voters. A very large number, exceeding 150,000, will vote in virtue of the payment of direct taxes. No doubt many of these would possess double qualifications, but there will still be an addition to the county franchise of upwards of 300,000 voters."

Passing on to the distribution of seats, Mr. Disraeli made the following observations:—"Now, sir, this is a question that very greatly interests the public mind, and I know there are members on both sides of the House who take a very deep interest in it. The proposition which I made upon a previous occasion has been described as quite inadequate to the occasion and to the circumstances in which the country is placed; and we have heard that it is an insufficient response to the demands of the public voice. I am perfectly ready to meet these objections, though I have no desire upon an occasion such as this to invite controversy, for I have no doubt there will be opportunities hereafter for entering upon matters of detail. It is said that there should be a much larger scheme of disfranchisement; that at the very least every town of 10,000 inhabitants or less should lose a member, and some say we should even go further than that. We are also told that a third member should be given to many places, and thus, by a process of

disfranchisement and cumulative votes, at last a perfect representation of the people would be accomplished. We have given the subject the great consideration which it deserves. My own opinion is that the votaries of this new system are not very numerous in the country, and I doubt whether they are very numerous in this House; but its advocates are no doubt in many cases men of distinguished ability and high character, and persons whose opinions upon any public subject will command and deserve attention.

"But whatever may be the number of those persons who advocate three-cornered constituencies and cumulative voting, there is no doubt that a very great noise has been made by them. I am willing to admit that, as far as the articles and the letters in the newspapers are concerned, the question is settled; but I have always observed that those articles and letters—I do not wish to speak slightly of them, for I have written leading articles for newspapers myself—have one distinguishing characteristic, and that is, that they always assume there is only one side of a question; but their writers are wise in their generation, because if they did not act on that assumption nobody at the moment would read their productions. As, then, the question of three-cornered constituencies and cumulative votes has been brought before the consideration of the House, I, and others who are near me, will meet the question frankly and fully. The House will not, I am sure, permit the introduction of any controversial matter upon the present occasion; but it has a right to hear the opinions of the government upon a question, and therefore I say that, having considered the matter without prejudice I am sure, and having completely and thoroughly tested it at every point and tried it in every quarter, our opinion is that *the scheme is erroneous in equity, and would be so in practice.*

"There are only two courses to follow if you wish to improve the representation

of the people by a redistribution of seats; there is no middle course. You must either create a new electoral map of England, or you must deal practically with the circumstances before you, and follow the line to which I at this moment refer, and which I think the government has followed. With regard to the proposition that there should be a complete revision of the representative system of the country as far as electoral localities are concerned, if I may presume to give advice to the House of Commons, I would say, do not make that a question to be settled by a parliamentary majority, or accepted on the authority of any ministry whatever. It is a subject too vast and too deep for us to treat of and deal with without preliminary investigation conducted by persons of the highest standing, and character, and experience, and learning in the country. When in possession of the result of their accumulated knowledge and of their mature thought and great experience, a popular assembly might weigh their opinions, and a practical ministry might embody their resolutions. There is no other means by which you can deal with this proposition; but if you are not of opinion that the electoral map of England should be reconstructed, then you must proceed prudently and practically; *you must inquire what unrepresented places ought, fairly speaking, to be represented, and you ought not to lose the opportunity then offered of giving the teeming multitudes of the counties as far as you can that direct representation which they want, and which indirectly I admit they possess.* These are two practical points which you ought to have before you. There is no medium between dealing with the whole question in a vast and solemn manner, by means adequate for the settlement of so great a matter, and the prudent, practical method which I mentioned.

"Well, sir, we are not prepared to take the first course, although I do not say it is unworthy of deep and respectful consideration; *we therefore propose to follow the*

*second*, and we have found towns in this country which we think ought to be represented, and whose representatives would bring fresh vigour to this House. The population of the counties, invigorated and vivified with the new franchises which you are giving it, will demand direct representation in this House; and you ought to move in that direction as far as you can, so that counties may no longer be said to be represented only indirectly by small boroughs. I am of opinion that this may be done without any very serious disturbance of our representative system. Whatever you do, your representation must be fairly distributed over the country; if you give a greater preponderance to one part at the expense of another, you create two nations; there will be a want of sympathy and cordiality between the parts, and you will, in fact, be going back to the principles of the Heptarchy."

The government proposed with the thirty seats that would be obtained from the process of disfranchisement to give, as Mr. Disraeli had suggested in his former bill, a representative to Hartlepool, Darlington, Burnley, Staleybridge, St. Helen's, Dewsbury, Barnsley, Middlesbrough, Wednesbury, Croydon, Gravesend, and Torquay, and two representatives to the Tower Hamlets. In respect to the counties, they proposed to divide North Lancashire, North Lincolnshire, West Kent, East Surrey, Middlesex, South Staffordshire, and South Devon, giving them two members each, and, dividing South Lancashire, to give it also an additional member. They also proposed to give a seat to the London University.

Mr. Disraeli thus concluded:—"I hope that the House will candidly consider this measure. As far as we are concerned, we have spared no pains, no thought, and have not shrunk from what was more important, perhaps, in endeavouring to bring it before the House. I will not advert unnecessarily to the circumstances attending the framing of this measure, which has now been brought before the House of Commons under very

great difficulties and at very great sacrifices. I do not wish to disguise that I have felt great chagrin and great mortification in connection with what has taken place; but I believe I have done my duty, and under the circumstances I do not think I could have done other than I have. In attempting to bring the question to this point we have lost those whose absence from our councils we more than regret; we have had to appeal to a high-spirited party to make what, no doubt, to some was to a certain extent a sacrifice of principle, much sacrifice of sentiment, and much sacrifice of interest. But we have not appealed in vain, because the members of that party were animated by the same feeling which influenced us—a sense of duty and conviction; they felt that the time had arrived when this question must be dealt with and settled extensively and completely. I hope, therefore, the House of Commons will give this measure a fair and candid consideration. We believe it is one which, if adopted in spirit, will settle its long differences; and that it is qualified to meet the requirements of the country. I am told for certain there are objections against it, but I beg to remind the House of the distinctions which we draw between popular privileges and democratic rights. I am told that in this measure there are checks and counterpoises, and that it assumes in this country the existence of classes. If there are checks and counterpoises in our scheme, we live under a constitution of which we boast that it is a constitution of checks and counterpoises. If the measure bears some reference to existing classes in this country, why should we conceal from ourselves, or omit from our discussions the fact, that this country is a country of classes, and a country of classes it will ever remain? What we desire to do is to give every one who is worthy of it a fair share in the government of the country by means of the elective franchise; but, at the same time, we have been equally anxious to maintain the character of the House, to make

propositions in harmony with the circumstances of the country, to prevent a preponderance of any class, and to give a representation to the nation."

At the very outset the bill encountered an opposition which plainly proved that, if the measure was to become law, it would have to undergo considerable alterations, additions, and emendations. No sooner had Mr. Disraeli taken his seat, than Mr. Gladstone rose to sound the first note of hostility. The leader of the Opposition regarded the figures cited by Mr. Disraeli as erroneous and visionary, and looked upon the alleged new voters as little more than men in buckram. He did not believe that 140,000 voters, after allowing for double qualifications, would be admitted by extending the franchise to all who personally paid their rates. Nor did he place much faith in the three safeguards proposed—the personal payment of rates, the length of residence, and dual voting. The first was fundamentally wrong. If household suffrage was to be established let it be established freely, and not leave it to the wealthier classes in a parish to enfranchise or disfranchise the other classes at pleasure. To the proposition for dual voting he was warmly opposed. Dual voting would be a gigantic instrument of fraud, and wake a proclamation of a war of classes. Mr. Lowe was of the same opinion, only more bitterly expressed. Mr. Roebuck considered that all the objections against the measure might be arranged in committee, but that if the bill were rejected, and the government thrown out, a deadlock would follow. Mr. Beresford Hope was sarcastic upon a Conservative government outbidding the Liberals in a Liberal market, and denounced the bill as a two-faced measure, which might either prove so restrictive as to take away with one hand what it seemed to give with the other, or else entail household suffrage in a most dangerous form. In reply Mr. Disraeli defended his statistics from the accusations of inaccuracy brought forward by Mr. Gladstone, and maintained that the principle

upon which he proposed to establish the borough franchise was an English principle, a constitutional and sound principle, which would recommend itself to the conscience and conviction of the country, and one which held out the prospect of security and peace. Under no conditions, in spite of the hint that had been thrown out, would the government *introduce household suffrage pure and simple*. There was no inconsistency in the Conservative party—a party which eight years ago had attempted to the best of their ability and at great sacrifice to grapple with the question—introducing and carrying through a reform bill. He hoped the House would give to his proposition a dispassionate consideration, and prove that there was a sincere desire to bring to a satisfactory issue a question that had too long existed unsettled. Let them not decide too rashly against a measure which they had never seen. "I think it would be wiser at least," he concluded, "to take this bill and read it before you decide upon its merits. I believe that it at least has this great object—it seeks to bring about the *settlement of a question deeply interesting to the people, in a manner conservative in the highest sense of the institutions of the country*."

His advice was accepted, and leave was given to bring in the bill.

Upon the second reading the Opposition opened its batteries in downright earnest (March 25, 1867). The debate lasted two nights, during which all the details of the bill were subjected to the closest inspection. The criticism of Mr. Gladstone was the most effective and exhaustive. As the bill was then framed he declared it could not pass. He laid before the House the alterations and additions he desired to be effected. A lodger franchise must be inserted. Measures must be taken to prevent traffic in the votes of the lowest classes of householders. The distinction between the lowest classes of householders must be abolished. The tax-paying franchise and the dual vote, which was almost univer-

sally condemned, must be abandoned. And in addition to these rejections the redistribution part of the scheme must be enlarged, and the county franchise reduced. Mr. Gladstone then examined the facilities proposed to be given to compound householders, arguing that by requiring the personal action of the householder and the personal payment of rates calculated on the full ratable value, the would-be voter would be fined nearly fifty per cent., and in some cases would have to pay his rates twice over. He insisted that it was not payment of rates, but a man's condition in life, his presumable character and independence, which ought to be the criteria of his fitness for the franchise. He condemned the bill as admitting a principle with needless breadth, but limiting its application by restrictions which would exclude at least two-thirds of those who appeared to be admitted. Mr. Bright was very bitter against the measure. The real object of the scheme was, he said, to introduce to the suffrage about as many men as would be admitted by an £8 tenure. Why then, he asked, talk of household franchise? The government were renewing the error of 1832 by excluding the working classes from the franchise. The bill was unsatisfactory, and was the product, not of the friends, but of the enemies of reform. Touching the working classes, there was nothing in the bill clear, or generous, or statesmanlike. If it were passed, it would spread universal dissatisfaction throughout the country. Willingly would he give the warmest support to a fair and honest measure. "I hate the ways," he cried, "I scorn the purposes of faction; and if I am driven now, or at any stage of this bill, to oppose the government, it is because the measure they have offered to us bears upon its face marks of deception and disappointment, and because I will be no party to any bill which would cheat the great body of my countrymen of the possession of that power in this House on which they have set their hearts, and which, as I believe, by

the constitution of this country, they may most justly claim."

In a careful and vigorous speech (March 26, 1867), Mr. Disraeli vindicated the provisions of his measure. He was perfectly ready to consent to some important modifications of his scheme, and to abandon some of the securities which had been the object of especial animadversion in the House. He never deemed that he could draw up a bill which would not require candid consideration in committee. "As if a reform bill," he exclaimed, "of all bills in the world, proposed to be read the second time, any one could expect it to pass the third reading in the exact shape in which it was then presented to the House!" But he certainly did expect fair criticism, and he strongly objected to the imperious tone of the speech of Mr. Gladstone. Then he proceeded to discuss in detail the objections which had been raised against his measure, and the insertions that had been suggested. To the lodger franchise he was favourable; indeed, he considered himself the father of that suffrage, since he was the first minister who had ever proposed its adoption by the House; and if satisfactory arguments should be urged in its favour in committee no doubt the House would adopt it. Nor was he prepared to insist upon the dual vote, which had been originally intended to provide against the swamping of the middle-class voters. In the same tone of toleration and compromise he discussed one by one the objections that Mr. Gladstone had brought forward to the government scheme. The House of Commons was, he said, eminently a practical assembly, and it was the business of ministers to introduce and pass a measure of reform; that could only be effected by deferring to the wishes, not only of his opponents, but of his supporters. He would endeavour not to disregard opinions, and when consistent with his past professions he would not persist in opposition. "One word before I conclude," he said in a peroration the earnest disinterestedness of which at once appealed to

both sides of the House, and was greeted with loud and general cheering—"One word before I conclude. I hear much of the struggle of parties in this House, and I hear much of combinations that may occur, and courses that may be taken, which may affect the fate of this bill. All I can say on the part of my colleagues and myself is, that we have no other wish at the present moment than, with the co-operation of this House, to bring the question of parliamentary reform to a settlement. I know the parliamentary incredulity with which many will receive avowals on our part that we are only influenced in the course we are taking by a sense of duty; but I do assure the House if they need such assurances after what we have gone through, after the sacrifices we have made, after having surrendered our political connections with men whom we more than regarded—I can assure them no other principle animates us, but a conviction that we ought not to desert our posts until this question has been settled. Rest assured that it is not for the weal of England that this settlement should be delayed. You may think that the horizon is not disturbed at the present moment. You may think that surrounding circumstances may be favourable to dilatory action. Some of you may think, in the excitement of the moment, that ambition may be gratified, and that the country may look favourably upon those who prevent the passing of this bill. Do not believe it. There is a deep responsibility with regard to this question, which rests not upon the government merely but upon the whole House of Commons. We are prepared, as I think I have shown, to act in all sincerity in this matter. Act with us, cordially and candidly, and assist us to carry out—as we are prepared to do as far as we can act in accordance with the principles which we have not concealed from you—this measure, which we hope will lead to a settlement of the question consistent with the maintenance of the representative character of this House. Act

with us, I say, cordially and candidly: you will find on our side complete reciprocity of feeling. *Pass the bill, and then change the ministry if you like.*"

Amid much enthusiasm the bill was then read a second time.

We have no intention of recording step by step the progress of this measure in committee. When the novelty of objection has worn off, nothing is drearier than to read speech after speech replete with the same arguments and the same repetitions. The details of a reform bill, however wisely conceived, are not inexhaustible; and by the time three or four of the ablest speakers in parliament have discussed dual voting, the rate-paying clauses, the "compound householder," the lodger franchise, the occupation franchise in counties, cumulative voting and the rest, little remains to excite the attention of the listener or the reader, bored perhaps already with the subject, and still more bored when that subject is treated by inferior minds, who talk only for talking's sake or to prove their activity to their constituents. We shall content ourselves with but a brief sketch of the history of the bill before it was enrolled on the statute-book, save when we have to touch upon those passages of arms, which enlivened the dullness of debate, between Mr. Disraeli and his opponents on either side of the House.

The bill was to be discussed in committee April 8, 1867; but between the second reading and that date various events had occurred of some importance to the fate of the measure. In the first place, a deputation from the Reform League had waited upon Mr. Gladstone, and had requested him to use his influence to get rid of the savings-bank clauses, on the ground of the intense selfishness of depositors in savings banks as a class. Then a deputation from the same body had waited upon the prime minister and the chancellor of the exchequer, urging the abandonment of the residential qualification and the rating clause, and the adoption of the lodger fran-

chise. But most important of all, a meeting of some 240 Liberal members had been held at the house of Mr. Gladstone, to decide upon the future course of action. At the suggestion of the leader of the Opposition, Mr. Coleridge, then one of the members for Exeter, was to be commissioned on the House going into committee on the bill to move the following amendment:—"That it be an instruction to the committee that they have power to alter the law of rating, and to provide that in every parliamentary borough the occupiers of tenements below a given rateable value be relieved from liability to personal rating, with the view to fix a line for the borough franchise at which all occupiers should be entered on the rate-book, and should have equal facilities for the enjoyment of such franchise as a residential occupation franchise." In the course of the discussion Mr. Gladstone admitted that the borough franchise and lodger franchise might be dealt with in committee; but with regard to personal rating they must put a gentle pressure on the government, and grant the committee power to alter the law of rating, so as to deal with the exemption from personal liability below a certain line.

And now opposition arose from a quarter where it was the least expected. Since the death of Lord Palmerston, Mr. Gladstone had occupied the position of leader of the Liberal party in the House of Commons. Essentially a man of books, and lacking the tact and nice consideration of the man of the world, his following soon showed symptoms of insubordination under his guidance. Several of the Liberals were offended by the domineering tone of their leader, by his intellectual arrogance, which commanded all that he suggested to be implicitly carried out, by the passionate bigotry with which he adhered to his own opinions and tolerated no interference, and by the various little tricks of temper and disposition which students, born to shine in the closet, so often dis-

play when called upon to control the proceedings and influence the minds of men. A small band of Liberals declined to consider themselves as sheep and Mr. Gladstone as the bell-wether, and to follow where he chose to take them; they murmured at having their hands tied by a minute instruction such as that which their chief had forced upon the party. It was not pleasant, as even a newspaper strong in the Liberal cause declared, for men "to be handed over bound hand and foot to a leader who simply called them together to tell them what he intended to do, and who seemed to expect that when he spoke the only duty of his followers was to nod assent." A meeting of the disaffected was held in the tea-room of the House of Commons, when a proposal was formally made and carried to cut down the instructions; and a deputation waited upon Mr. Gladstone to inform him of what had been done. To avoid an open division, and after this defection almost certain defeat, Mr. Gladstone arranged to limit the instructions to the first clause of the resolution. Nicknames are soon given in the House of Commons to men and measures; and as the Liberal members comprising this meeting kept more or less together during the subsequent discussions on the reform bill, they came to be popularly known as the "Tea-room party."\*

Three days after the collapse of this elaborate instruction the work of the committee began in real earnest. Mr. Gladstone moved an amendment upon the clause prescribing the new borough franchise, with the object of making the direct and personal payment of rates by the householder not essential to the franchise. He therefore

\* When the House of Commons assembled (April 8), Mr. Locke asked whether, in the event of the second clause being withdrawn from the instructions, government would accept the first. Mr. Disraeli at first declined to answer a hypothetical question, but on being assured that it had been put with the knowledge of Mr. Coleridge, he said that government "had all along presumed the committee would have power to alter the rating, so that to induce them to accept it did not require even a gentle pressure." He also thought it would have been as well that the mover of the resolution should have declared his own intentions.



proposed to insert in the qualifying clause these words—"Whether he in person or his landlord be rated to the relief of the poor," and a debate lasting two nights followed upon this amendment. The Conservative party were of opinion, that to strike out rating from the qualifications for the franchise was contrary to the whole current of recent legislation and to all the elements of national representation. In fixing on rating as a qualification, the government had acted in accordance with all former precedents, while every attempt to extend the franchise by drawing the line at a lower figure of occupation had failed. The principle of the bill was that of self-election as opposed to a fixed line—that all should be admitted to the electoral body who chose to open the door for themselves. On the other hand, the Liberals declared that the bill opposed great barriers to enfranchisement; the rates of two-thirds of the houses under the value of ten pounds in boroughs were compounded for, and as the occupiers of those Houses would practically remain disfranchised, the bill would do little towards enfranchising the working classes in towns. The object of the amendment was, that every person who had the borough franchise should be put on the same footing. At that time the law required the occupier to be on the rate-book, and the payment of the landlord was, for the purpose of enfranchisement, the tenant's payment. Why for the purposes of disfranchisement alter the law? Mr. Disraeli declined to support this amendment, for from the principle of personal rating ministers had resolved not to swerve. It was on this occasion, when refuting the arguments of the Liberals, that Mr. Disraeli passed the well-known criticism on the eloquence of Mr. Beresford Hope.

It was during the discussion upon this reform bill that the animosity which Mr. Disraeli excited among the disaffected of his own party reached its height. By a certain section of the Conservatives the policy of the chancellor of

the exchequer was openly opposed; but not content with attacking the opinions of Mr. Disraeli he himself was branded as a dangerous adventurer, to be cried down in newspapers and to be shown up in reviews. No adjective was too venomous to describe his teaching, no epithet was too base to fling at himself personally. It is pleasant to think that some who at that time were among the bitterest enemies of Mr. Disraeli, afterwards frankly admitted that their estimate both of the policy and of the man had been utterly wrong, and amply atoned for their unjust suspicions by loyally giving in their adherence to their once much-abused leader, and in several instances of becoming his sincere and attached friends. Of this little band of jealous and malicious secessionists Mr. Beresford Hope was a prominent personage. His wealth, his intellectual activity, his alliance with one of the proudest houses in England, his ownership of the cleverest journal that the weekly press possessed, all tended to raise him to a position of authority among the disaffected, and to have his advice listened to with deference. He did not believe in Mr. Disraeli; he refused to accept his dangerous teaching; he declined to range himself among his supporters. Mr. Beresford Hope would, in spite of his Dutch descent, have perhaps seen no impropriety in himself leading the House of Commons and in being admitted to the councils of the cabinet; but to him, the descendant of an Amsterdam merchant, it was strongly repugnant that one who was the descendant of a Venetian merchant should be the representative of the English gentry and the animating spirit of a Tory administration. "I am prepared," said Mr. Hope after having given his reasons, if spiteful distortions of facts and vulgar personalities can be called reasons, why he supported the amendment of Mr. Gladstone—"I am prepared for anything which I may hear. I have since the great Conservative break-up of 1846 been longer out of parliament than in it; because although I have ever been a

Conservative or Tory, I never would fall down and worship the golden image set up in the deserts of Arabia. I have been a free lance long enough not much to mind whatever may happen to me: and I can say that sink or swim, dissolution or no dissolution, in or out of the next parliament, I for one, with my whole heart and conscience, will vote against the Asian mystery."

Mr. Hope can scarcely be said to have scored a great triumph on this occasion. He had planned an elaborate attack, had carried it out with some eloquence, and had in return expected a smart onslaught. "I know that for saying what I have done," he cried, "I shall subject myself to pointed gibes from one member of this House; but I am old-fashioned enough to think that pointed gibes from some quarters may be a real compliment to an honest man." Mr. Disraeli was, however, often in the habit of disappointing those who trusted to obtain notoriety by receiving a reply to their attacks, passing such onslaughts by in disdain and treating them as if they had never been delivered. On this occasion he certainly condescended to notice the comments of Mr. Beresford Hope, though he did not indulge in many "pointed gibes;" he contented himself with making a few remarks which will perhaps be remembered long after the individual who excited them has been forgotten. "Now, sir," said Mr. Disraeli (April 12, 1867), defending the provisions of his bill, "I shall not notice some remarks made by the hon. gentleman the member for Stoke-upon-Trent [Mr. Beresford Hope], because he evidently expected that I was going to make a very elaborate reply to what he said. I answer him that I listened with the greatest pleasure to the invective which he delivered against me. His style is very ornamental to discussion, but it requires practice. And so far as my honourable friend displayed his talents to-night, I listened with the greatest satisfaction. All his exhibitions in this House are distinguished by a prudery which charms me; and when he talks of

Asian mysteries I may perhaps by way of reply remark that there is a *Batavian grace* about his exhibition which takes the sting out of what he has said." When the style of oratory indulged in by Mr. Beresford Hope is remembered—the charm of manner, the polished poses, and the dignified utterances which characterize the consummate speaker—the expression "*Batavian grace*" is very happy.

At the close of the debate upon Mr. Gladstone's amendment a division was taken, when amid tumultuous cheering from the Conservative party, a majority of twenty-one voted for the government. This victory plainly showed that the Liberals were disunited, and that several of them, casting off their fealty to their leader, gave their support to the ministry. Mr. Gladstone had several other important amendments which he had intended to introduce, but after this defeat he felt it would be useless to bring them forward. In a letter to Mr. Crawford, one of the members for the city of London, who had inquired whether the other amendments would be moved, Mr. Gladstone thus wrote—"The country can hardly now fail to be aware that those gentlemen of the Liberal party whose convictions allow them to act unitedly on the question are not a majority, but a minority, in the existing House of Commons; and they have not the power they were supposed to possess of limiting or directing the action of the administration, or shaping the provisions of the reform bill. Still, having regard to the support which my proposal with respect to personal rating secured from so large a number of Liberal members, I am not less willing than heretofore to remain at the service of the party to which they belong; and when any suitable occasion shall arise, if it shall be their wish, I shall be prepared again to attempt concerted action upon this or any other subject for the public good. But until then, desirous to avoid misleading the country and our friends, I feel that prudence requires me to withdraw from my attempts

to assume the initiative in amending a measure which cannot perhaps be effectually amended except by a reversal, formal or virtual, of the vote of Friday the 11th; for such attempts, if made by me, would, I believe, at the present critical moment not be the most likely means of advancing their own purpose. Accordingly I shall not proceed with the amendments now on the paper in my name, nor give notice of other amendments such as I had contemplated; but I shall gladly accompany others in voting against any attempt, from whatever quarter, to limit yet farther the scanty modicum of enfranchisement proposed by the government, or in improving, where it may be practicable, the provisions of the bill."

During the whole time the reform bill was being discussed in committee Mr. Disraeli was always at his post. He did not leave the work of supervision to a subordinate, but with his own lips refuted arguments, accepted suggestions, and stated the policy of the cabinet. He spoke over three hundred times, and was in reality the government throughout those memorable weeks of constant and suggestive criticism. The reform bill was the work of Mr. Disraeli, and of him alone. He had "educated" his party to accept his teaching, but the education had only been acquired at the expense of almost hourly lessons from the master. "If we wish to make progress with this bill," cried Mr. Bernal Osborne, "let us have no law. Let us rely on the chancellor of the exchequer. I say this without any innuendo respecting his sincerity. I always thought the chancellor of the exchequer the greatest Radical in this House. He has achieved what no other man in the country could have done. As I have said before, he has lugged up that great omnibus-full of stupid, heavy country gentlemen. I only say 'stupid' in the parliamentary sense. It is a perfectly parliamentary word. He has converted these Conservatives into Radical reformers. In fact, the chancellor of the exchequer is the

ministry by himself, for it could not exist a day without him, and all the rest who sit near him are most respectable pawns on the board, their opinion being not worth a pin; when I hear the chancellor of the exchequer say a thing I know it shall and will be so." We do not quote this passage to prove that we agree with Mr. Osborne's estimate of the political views entertained by Mr. Disraeli, but as an acknowledgment of the vigilance and dominating influence then exercised by the chancellor of the exchequer.

In committee the bill underwent, as Mr. Disraeli had anticipated, numerous changes. These changes the chancellor of the exchequer courted, for he knew no reform bill would be acceptable unless both sides of the House raised suggestions. Compromise was to be the essence of the measure. One by one Liberal suggestions were accepted and Conservative proposals abandoned, and *vice versa*. The "compound householder" was thrown over; Yarmouth, Lancaster, Reigate, and Totness were disfranchised; the government had proposed to cut down all constituencies under 7000 to one member each; an amendment was moved to enlarge the minimum to 10,000, and carried in spite of the opposition of the government; a third member was added to Liverpool, Manchester, Birmingham, and Leeds. Indeed, before the bill came on for the third reading it had been so changed as in some measure to justify the charges of certain disappointed Conservatives that the bill was in no sense the same bill which the government had introduced. Several of the demands brought forward by Mr. Gladstone had been granted. The lodger franchise had been given; the distinctions between compounders and noncompounders had been abolished; the taxing franchise and the dual vote had been omitted; the re-distribution of seats had been enlarged fully fifty per cent.; the county franchise had been reduced; the voting papers had been omitted; and the educational and savings-bank franchises had been thrown

over. The "Conservative surrender," sneered the foes of the bill, had been thorough. "A clear majority of votes," wrote a reviewer in a Conservative organ, "in a clear majority of constituencies, has been made over to those who have no other property than the labour of their hands. The omnipotence of parliament is theirs."

Upon the motion to read the reform bill the third time (July 15, 1867), Mr. Disraeli rose to defend the changes that had been effected in the measure. Both the bill and its author had been bitterly inveighed against by Lord Cranbourne and Mr. Lowe in what the chancellor of the exchequer very justly called "two very violent speeches—that is, speeches very abusive of the measure before the House, and very abusive of the ministers who have introduced it." Nothing, indeed, could be more acrid and unjust than the concluding remarks of Lord Cranbourne's speech, which imputed the most interested motives to Mr. Disraeli, and declared that the Conservative party under his teaching had been false to the articles of their political creed. "After all," said Lord Cranbourne, "our theory of government is not that a certain number of statesmen should place themselves in office and do whatever the House of Commons bids them. Our theory of government is that on each side of the House there should be men supporting definite opinions, and that what they have supported in opposition they should adhere to in office; and that every one should know, from the fact of their being in office, that those particular opinions will be supported. If you reverse that, and declare that, no matter what a man has supported in opposition, the moment he gets into office it shall be open to him to reverse and repudiate it all, you practically destroy the whole basis on which our form of government rests, and you make the House of Commons a mere scrambling place for office. You practically banish all honourable men from the political arena, and you will find, in the long run, that the time will come when your statesmen will

become nothing but political adventurers; and that professions of opinion will be looked upon as so many political manoeuvres for the purpose of attaining office. . . . I entreat hon. gentlemen opposite not to believe that my feelings on this subject are dictated simply by my hostility to this particular measure, though I object to it most strongly, as the House is aware. But even if I took a contrary view—if I deemed it to be most advantageous—I still should deeply regret that the position of the executive should have been so degraded as it has been in the present session; I should deeply regret to find that the House of Commons has applauded a policy of legerdemain; and I should, above all things, regret that this great gift to the people—if gift you think it—should have been purchased at the cost of a political betrayal which has no parallel in our parliamentary annals, which strikes at the root of all that mutual confidence which is the very soul of our party government, and on which only the strength and freedom of our representative institutions can be sustained."

The man who cried, "Pass the bill, and then turn out the ministry if you will," should certainly not have been accused of having employed selfish and interested tactics to gain his ends. Mr. Disraeli saw that the nation was resolved upon having a reform bill, and that the only measure which would receive the sanction of the House and the country was one founded upon a broad basis. Provided no sacrifice of principle was demanded, he had been willing to act as the majority in the Lower House required, and in several instances he had granted concessions which he would far rather have not made. Still, as he was aware that the bill could only become law by each party acting in a spirit of compromise, he had no alternative. However, in all that he had accorded there was nothing inconsistent with his past professions and with the traditions of his followers. He had introduced a bill which was national without being democratic, and conservative

without being exclusive. Mindful of the agitation which had immediately followed the first reform bill for a further extension of the franchise, he desired to frame such a measure of reform as would satisfy the country without degrading it, and settle the question for some considerable time. To effect these ends he had long been of opinion that no settlement of the question would be complete or satisfactory unless its basis rested on household suffrage, under certain conditions,\* and he believed that the provisions he had suggested as to the personal payment of rates and residence afforded as much security as could well be obtained. The bill which had been drawn up was at once, as Lord Derby characterized it, "large, extensive, and Conservative," and would effect a settlement which, for a long time to come, would be considered satisfactory.

Mr. Disraeli's defence of his measure was unanswerable. He vindicated himself from the charges of inconsistency which had been levelled against him, for during the last fifteen years he had maintained the opinions he now held. In 1852, when Mr. Hume brought forward the question of parliamentary reform, in a very comprehensive manner it was his (Mr. Disraeli's) duty, as the organ of the cabinet, to express the opinions of ministers upon the subject. "Upon that occasion," he said, "with the full authority of a unanimous cabinet, expressing the opinions of Lord Derby's government with regard to the question

of parliamentary reform, I expressed our opinion that if that subject were again opened—and its immediate re-opening we deprecated—the fault which had been committed in 1832 in neglecting to give a due share of the representation to the working classes ought to be remedied. That was in the year 1852, when with the full authority of the cabinet I said that no measure of parliamentary reform could be deemed satisfactory which did not remedy the great fault of the settlement of 1832; and I then contended, as I have since, that before the settlement of 1832 franchises existed which were peculiar to the working classes, and that although the precise character of those franchises could not perhaps have been entirely defended, they should certainly not have been destroyed without the invention of *fresh franchises more adapted to the times in which we live and to the requirements of the classes concerned.*" So much for his inconsistency and for that of the Conservative party.

Mr. Disraeli then came to the year 1858, when his party had again to consider the question of reform. "It was proposed," he continued, "upon that occasion, in the cabinet of Lord Derby, that the borough franchise should be founded upon the principle of household suffrage. It is very true that that proposition was not adopted; but it was not opposed, so far as I can charge my memory, on any political ground; it was not adopted by many members of the cabinet, because they believed that if a scheme of that kind were brought forward it would receive no support, generally speaking, in the country. That opinion of Lord Derby's government, I may say, was ultimately formed on no mean knowledge; elaborate machinery was had recourse to in order to obtain the information necessary to form an accurate opinion on the subject, and the general tenor of the information which reached us certainly forced us to the conclusion that there was an insuperable objection on the part of the constitu-

\* "It may be said, you have established a democratic government in England, because you have established household suffrage, and you have gone much further than the measures which you previously opposed. Well, now, let me see if there is anything in that. Now, I am not at all prepared to admit that household suffrage, with the constitutional conditions upon which we have established it—namely, residence and rating—has established a democratic government. But it is unnecessary to enter into that consideration, because we have not established household suffrage in England. There are, I think I may say, probably 4 000,000 houses in England. Under our ancient laws, and under the Act of Lord Grey, about 1,000,000 of those householders possess the franchise. Under the new Act of 1867 something more than 500,000 will be added to that million. Well, then, I want to know if there are 4,000,000 householders, and 1,500,000 in round numbers have the suffrage, how can household suffrage be said to be established in England?"—*Speech at Edinburgh, October 29, 1867.*

encies at that time against any reduction of the borough franchise whatever. That this was a true conclusion, and that the information which led to that conclusion was correct, there can be no doubt; for although we were forced to quit office by a resolution declaring that a reduction of the borough franchise was expedient, those who succeeded us failed in carrying any measure of that kind, and remained in office for years without at all departing from their inaction." At the same time Mr. Disraeli was careful to state that in 1859 the cabinet of Lord Derby was unanimous, that if they attempted to reduce the borough qualification which then existed *they must have recourse to household suffrage, whatever might be the conclusion.* Why then, he asked, were the Conservative leaders tricky and false to their principles, as had been alleged, for introducing in 1867 a measure they had agreed upon in 1859?

With regard to the working classes, continued Mr. Disraeli, he had no sympathy with those politicians who approved of "the enfranchisement of a certain and favoured portion of the working classes;" who were assured by their flatterers that they were "very much superior to every other portion of the working classes;" and who were to be invested with the franchise "on the implied condition that they were to form a certain Prætorian guard, and prevent every other portion of the working classes of this country from acquiring the privilege, and thus those other portions would be shut out from what is called the pale of the constitution." He opposed such proposals, preferring to appeal to the sympathies of the great body of the people. "The working classes," he asserted, "will now probably have a more extensive sympathy with our political institutions, which, if they are in a healthy state, ought to enlist popular feeling, because they should be embodiments of the popular requirements of the country. It appeared to us that if this great change were made in the constituent body, there would be a better chance of arriving at the more

patriotic and national feelings of the country than by admitting only a more favoured section, who, in consideration of the manner in which they were treated, and the spirit in which they were addressed, together with the peculiar qualities which were ascribed to them, would regard themselves as marked out as it were from the rest of their brethren and from the country, and as raised up to be critics rather than supporters of the constitution. These were our views, and we retain the conviction which guided us in 1859, and from which if we have deviated, it was only for a moment, and because we thought that on this question it was impossible to come to any solution except in the spirit of compromise and mutual concession."

Upon the Conservative government acceding to office, continued Mr. Disraeli, it was found absolutely necessary to deal with the question. "We came into power," said he, "unpledged; and I have heard with some astonishment reproaches in regard to our change of opinion. I am not here to defend, to vindicate, or even to mitigate every expression I may have used on this subject during the course of many years; but I can appeal to the general tenor of the policy we have recommended. I have always said that the question of parliamentary reform was one which it was quite open to the Conservative party to deal with. I have said so in this House and on the hustings, in the presence of my countrymen, a hundred times. I have always said, and I say so now, that when you come to a settlement of this question, you cannot be bound to any particular scheme, as if you were settling the duties on sugar; but dealing with the question on great constitutional principles, and which I hope to show have not been deviated from, you must deal with it also with a due regard to the spirit of the time and the requirements of the country." He then touched upon the alterations that had been effected. He denied that the changes in the bill had been due to the dictation of

the Opposition. The dual vote had been abandoned a fortnight before Mr. Gladstone had imperiously commanded its desertion. "It was given up," quietly remarked the speaker, "in consequence of the unanimous reprobation of that political device by the Conservative party." The security of the two years' residence had been abandoned because on a division the government were defeated by a large majority, and because many of the Conservatives were opposed to it. The county franchise had been reduced at the express wish of the Conservative squirearchy. The "fancy franchises" had been abandoned because the lodger franchise had been accepted by the House, and it was quite unnecessary to have the fancy franchises when the lodger franchise had been adopted. Nor had there been any great deviation of principle or anything astounding in the acceptance of the lodger franchise, since the lodger franchise was one of the propositions contained in the Conservative bill of 1859.\* He, however, frankly admitted that many of the securities and precautions he had framed had been yielded; but they had been abandoned not always or in the greatest degree at the bidding of his opponents, whilst some of them had been given up to the

\* In a recent decision (December 21, 1881) the Court of Appeal has thus laid down the law as to the vexed question of what constituted the distinction between a *lodger* and an *occupying tenant*. "It was a very difficult question," said the Master of the Rolls, who delivered the judgment, "and he was unable to find an exhaustive definition of the term 'lodger.' He thought it right, therefore, to say that the meaning of the term 'lodger,' or the term 'occupying tenant,' must depend very much on the circumstances in each particular case, but that was to lay down what would be of very little assistance to revising barristers. He said, therefore, that in his opinion, where the owner of a house did not let out the whole of the house, but retained part of it for his own residence, where he retained the passages and staircases, reserving to the inmates the right of ingress and egress, and where he reserved the rights of control over the premises, such as the turning out of the lodgers, the landlord was the *occupying tenant* and the other inmates *lodgers*. But where the landlord let out each floor separately, reserving to his tenants the rights to the passages and staircases, and exercised no control over the whole of the house except the right to enter the various rooms for purposes of repairs, then the inmates were *occupying inhabitants* and entitled to the franchise." By this decision a vast number of persons, who were not intended by the original framers of the reform bill to have a vote, will be admitted to the franchise. It is to be hoped that the attention of parliament will be directed to this matter.

general feeling of the House. If the dictation of Mr. Gladstone had been imperious, it had certainly not been very successful; for out of the twenty-six considerable divisions that had been taken upon the measure, the leader of the Opposition had been defeated in eighteen. Mr. Disraeli then proceeded to argue that the whole character of the bill had not been altered as its enemies asserted. On the contrary the bill, though adapted of course to the requirements of the year in which they were legislating, was, at the same time, in harmony with the general policy which the Conservative party had always maintained.

He closed with an attack upon Mr. Lowe. Mr. Lowe had indulged in the most gloomy prophecies as to the future of the country, and had accused the government of carrying their measure by treachery. "I was looking to-day," he said as he concluded a speech which Mr. Disraeli vowed reminded him of the production of "some inspired school-boy," "I was looking to-day at the head of the lion which was sculptured in Greece during her last agony after the battle of Chæronea, to commemorate that event; and I admired the power and the spirit which portrayed in the face of that noble beast the rage, the disappointment, and the scorn of a perishing nation and of a down-trodden civilization, and I said to myself, 'Oh for an orator, oh for an historian, oh for a poet, who would do the same thing for us!' We also have had our battle of Chæronea; we have had our dishonest victory. That England that was wont to conquer other nations has gained a shameful victory over herself; and oh that a man would rise in order that he might set forth, in words that could not die, the shame, the rage, the scorn, the indignation, and the despair with which the measure is viewed by every Englishman who is not a slave to the trammels of party, or who is not dazzled by the glare of a temporary and ignoble success!" Of what treachery had he been guilty? asked Mr. Disraeli. "The right honourable

gentleman," he said, "concluded his attack upon us by accusing us of treachery, and by informing us that he is going to support all those measures which he has hitherto opposed in this House—though I believe he advocated them elsewhere—and that he will lean I suppose to those Australian politics which rendered him first so famous. The right honourable gentleman told us, that in the course we are pursuing there is infamy. The expression is strong, but I never quarrel with that sort of thing, nor do I like on that account to disturb an honourable gentleman in his speech, particularly when he happens to be approaching his peroration. Our conduct, however, according to him, is infamous—that is his statement—because in office we are supporting measures of parliamentary reform which we disapprove and to which we have hitherto been opposed. Well, if we disapprove the bill which we are recommending the House to accept and sanction to-night, our conduct certainly would be objectionable. If we, from the bottom of our hearts, do not believe that the measure which we are now requesting you to pass is on the whole the wisest and best that could be passed under the circumstances, I would even admit that our conduct was infamous. But I want to know what the right honourable gentleman thinks of his own conduct when, having assisted in turning out the government of Lord Derby in 1859 because they would not reduce the borough franchise—he, if I am not greatly mistaken, having been one of the most active managers of that intrigue—the right honourable gentleman accepted office in 1860 under the government of Lord Palmerston, who, of course, brought forward a measure of parliamentary reform which it would appear the right honourable gentleman also disapproved, and more than disapproved, inasmuch as, although a member of the government, he privately and successfully solicited his political opponents to defeat. And yet this is the right hon. gentleman who talks of infamy! Sir, the

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prognostications of evil uttered by the noble lord (Lord Cranbourne) I can respect, because I know they are sincere; the warnings and the prognostications of the right honourable gentleman I treat in another spirit. For my part I do not believe the country is in danger. I think England is safe in the race of men who inhabit her; that she is safe in something much more precious than her accumulated capital—her accumulated experience; she is safe in her national character, in her fame, in the tradition of a thousand years, and in that glorious future which I believe awaits her."

This was the last speech upon the third reading of the bill. On Mr. Disraeli taking his seat the speaker put the question, "That this bill be read a third time." A loud and general cry of "Ay" was the reply; and amid tumultuous cheering that so vexed a subject as parliamentary reform had at last been settled, the further question, "That the bill do pass," was declared.

Into the history of its progress through the Upper House we need not enter at length. The peers resolved not merely to form themselves into a chamber of registry, but to act with perfect independence and to carefully consider the provisions of the bill. Various amendments were proposed, but the measure underwent little substantial alteration. The resolution of Lord Halifax, the quondam Sir Charles Wood of budget fame, as to the inadequacy of the redistribution scheme, was negatived by a large majority. The amendment of Lord Cairns, raising the lodger franchise from £10 to £15, was first carried; but a few days afterwards, on the motion of Earl Russell, the lodger qualification was restored to its original condition of a £10 rental; clause five, which reduced the copyhold qualification from £10 to £5, was struck out by a considerable majority; the proposal of Lord Cairns for the representation of minorities in three-cornered constituencies was carried by an immense majority. After a somewhat keen contest the amendment of Earl

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Grey, that boroughs with less than 12,000 inhabitants should only return one member, was negatived; the proposal of Lord Lyveden, to disfranchise all boroughs with less than 5000 inhabitants, was rejected by a large majority; and the bill was read a third time and passed in the House of Lords, August 6, 1867. The debate on the measure was brought to a close by Lord Derby. "I have had the honour," he said, "of holding a seat in one or the other houses of parliament for five-and-forty years, and during that space of time I do not recollect another instance of a measure of such vast importance, and involving such great and extensive change, passing through parliament with so little display of party spirit, or so little of acerbity and acrimony, as have marked the progress of the bill to which your lordships have just given your assent. . . . No doubt we are making a great experiment, and taking a *leap in the dark*, but I have the greatest confidence in the sound sense of my fellow-countrymen, and I entertain a strong hope that the extended franchise which we are now conferring upon them will be the means of placing the institutions of this country on a firmer basis, and that the passing of the measure will tend to increase the loyalty and contentment of a great portion of Her Majesty's subjects."

On the bill being carried down to the House of Commons, the amendments of the peers were taken into consideration. Upon only three of the amendments did a contest ensue; the first was as to the representation of minorities, which was agreed to; the second, which restricted the number of votes of the electors of the city of London to three, was also accepted; but the third, which authorized the using of voting papers, was rejected by a large majority. The Upper House acquiesced in this revision of their proceedings by the Commons, and the bill received the royal assent, August 15, 1867.

Such was the history of this memorable

measure, which put an end, as Mr. Disraeli said, to the monopoly of reform which the Liberals asserted that they only had the right to enjoy, and which also proved that the Tory party was indeed the national party. During the earlier decades of the century the object of the Whigs had been twofold—to extend the suffrages of the people, and to keep the Tory party from office. For a time they succeeded; the reform bill of 1832 was passed, and the Tories were excluded from power. Then came the reaction; a storm arose upon the subject of free trade, and the Tories once more were seated in Downing Street. And now it was that Lord John Russell, seeing his rivals in power, began to find out flaws in his own handiwork, and to declare that not only the reform bill was a failure, but that a new measure was absolutely necessary. "This discovery, however," said Lord Malmesbury pointedly, "was not made until a Tory government had come into office. Then commenced an agitation which resulted in one reform bill after another; and the country finding that it was a perpetual see-saw between reform bills and governments, became weary of the procrastination which was the inevitable consequence of party conflicts." The Conservatives resolved to take the matter out of the hands of the Liberals and to settle the question, not permanently, for "there is no finality in politics," but at least for a time. Their reform bill had no pretensions to being considered perfect, for it was a bill of compromise; the House of Commons was taken into partnership, and because the bill was one of compromise, and unlike the other reform bills that had been brought forward, it became law.

In the framing of the measure there had been no violation of Conservative principles. The question of the franchise had become a simple sliding scale, and for years the leaders of the Conservative party had come to the conclusion that there was no resting-place to be found but in household suffrage under certain restric-

tions. There was no secret as to this opinion, for it was openly avowed. Mr. Disraeli was in favour of it; Lord Derby was in favour of it; when Lord Carnarvon was paying a visit to Lord Malmesbury, the subject was discussed. "I am quite sure he [Lord Carnarvon] is so truthful," said Lord Malmesbury to his peers, when introducing the bill owing to the illness of Lord Derby, "and has so good a memory that he will bear me out, when I remind him that *long before this question was discussed in the cabinet, even I believe before we were a government*, when he did me the honour of paying me a visit in the country, we had a long conversation upon this very important subject. I then told him in distinct terms that, in my opinion, there was no resting-place short of household suffrage, and that I believed the adoption of that suffrage afforded the only hope of passing a reform bill." The reform bill of Mr. Disraeli was Liberal and yet Conservative, and consequently the most comprehensive measure that had ever been introduced. It was Liberal in the highest sense, because it was generous and tolerant without being revolutionary; it was Conservative in the highest sense, because it was national yet discriminating, patriotic but not exclusive. It desired to see men in communities, and not communities only represented in the House of Commons. It wished that the opinions of large minorities should be declared, and not be shut out from representation. It extended electoral rights to all worthy of enjoying the privilege, and yet avoided the evils of democracy. It might be considered "a leap in the dark;" but its provisions have since testified that it was a leap which ought to have been made, and that in spite of the supposed darkness no danger has been sustained on alighting. "I have had great satisfaction," said Her Majesty when dismissing the houses, "in giving my assent to a bill for amending the representation of the people in parliament. I earnestly trust that the extensive and liberal measure which you

have passed may effect a durable settlement of a question which has long engaged public attention; and that the large number of my subjects who will be for the first time admitted to the exercise of the elective franchise may, in the discharge of the duties thereby devolved upon them, prove themselves worthy of the confidence which parliament has reposed in them." That hope has not been belied.\*

During the recess Mr. Disraeli was invited by a section of his supporters to Edinburgh. Owing to clerical topics which so often enter into the history of politics, the tone of Scotland is liberal—liberal in its religious feeling, in its commercial ambition, and in its agricultural tendencies. Yet where the rival policy prevails, it would be impossible to find within the three kingdoms a Conservatism more pure and yet more ardent, when circumstances call it forth, than that displayed north of the Tweed. Scottish Conservatism is impregnated with the national characteristics of the inhabitants; it is loyal, yet critical, as becomes a reflective people; it is persevering, and not discouraged by defeat; sober, yet earnest in the advocacy of its principles; hard, yet open to conviction; and though stanch in its adherence, ever mindful that there is no question but which has two sides. An Englishman is often Conservative owing to his social surroundings, or because the tenets of Conservatism pander to his prejudices; a Scotchman, on the contrary, since he attaches himself to a minority, is Conservative because he has studied the subject and thought it out, and has arrived at the conclusion that Conservatism is more favourable to the moral welfare and material prosperity of a country than the creed, with its dangerous developments, of the Liberal party. After

\* Reform Acts were passed for Scotland and Ireland the following year. In the Scotch counties the ownership franchise was reduced to "lands and heritages" of the yearly value of £5, and a £14 occupation franchise established. The Scotch boroughs received a household and a lodger franchise. In Ireland no change was made in the county constituencies; but the borough franchise was further reduced to a £4 rating occupation.

the passing of the reform bill the Scotch Conservatives resolved to give a banquet in honour of the event. Mr. Disraeli was invited and accepted the invitation.

The speech he delivered on the occasion was foreshadowed by certain observations which fell from his lips a few weeks previously to his travelling north, at a dinner given to the ministers at the Mansion House. "I have seen in my time," said Mr. Disraeli, addressing the lord mayor, "several monopolies terminated, and recently I have seen the termination of the monopoly of Liberalism. Nor are we to be surprised when we see that certain persons, who believed that they had an hereditary right whenever it was necessary to renovate the institutions of their country, should be somewhat displeased that any other persons should presume to interfere with those changes which I hope, in the spirit of true patriotism, they believed the requirements of the state rendered necessary. But I am sure that when the hubbub has subsided—when the shrieks and screams which were heard some time ago, and which have already subsided into sobs and sighs, shall be thoroughly appeased—nothing more terrible will be discovered to have occurred than that the Tory party has resumed its natural functions in the government of the country. *For what is the Tory party unless it represents national feeling? If it do not represent national feeling Toryism is nothing.* It does not depend upon hereditary coteries of exclusive nobles. It does not attempt power by attracting to itself the spurious force which may accidentally arise from advocating cosmopolitan principles, or talking cosmopolitan jargon. *The Tory party is nothing unless it represent and uphold the institutions of the country.* For what are the institutions of the country? They are entirely in theory, and ought to be, as I am glad to see they are likely to be in practice, the embodiment of the national necessities, and the only security for popular privileges. Well then, I cannot help believing that because my Lord Derby

and his colleagues have taken a happy opportunity to enlarge the privileges of the people of England, we have not done anything but strengthen the institutions of the country, the essence of whose force is that they represent the interests and guard the rights of the people."

At the banquet in the Edinburgh Corn Exchange (October 29, 1867), Mr. Disraeli expressed similar views, and narrated at some length the story of the passing of the reform bill. He vindicated the government scheme of reform, and proved that the Conservative party were perfectly at liberty to deal with it. He then made the remark which led to so much comment and spiteful criticism at the time. "Seven memorable years," he said, "elapsed, from 1859 to 1866, when Lord Derby was called again to power, and during these seven years the question of parliamentary reform was before the public mind and under the examination of parliament. During that period of seven years, with the advice—I may say under the instructions—of my colleagues, I expressed the principles upon which any measure of parliamentary reform ought to be established. Now mark this, because there are things which you may not have heard in any speech which has been made in the city of Edinburgh, *we had to prepare the mind of the country, and to educate—if it be not arrogant to use such a phrase—to educate our party.* It is a large party, and requires its attention to be called to questions of this kind with some pressure. We had to prepare the mind of parliament and of the country on this question of reform."\*

The remarks of Mr. Disraeli upon antagonism to progress are worthy of study.

\* Mr. Disraeli, contrary to his usual custom, thus replied, in a letter to the *Times*, to a misrepresentation made by Earl Russell in the House of Lords:—

"Sir—Lord Russell observed last night in the House of Lords that I 'boasted at Edinburgh that whilst during seven years I opposed a reduction of the borough franchise, I had been all that time educating my party with the view of bringing about a much greater reduction of the franchise than that which my opponents had proposed.' As a general rule I never notice misrepresentations of what I may have said; but as this charge was made against me in an august assembly, and by a late first minister of the crown, I will not refrain from observing that the charge has no founda-

Talking of the bill of 1832, he said—"You passed a reform bill then, and everybody was frightened; they were so frightened that they collected together and believed that the only security against further danger was in associating together to prevent further change. Now we all feel what an error was that. It is as fallacious an opinion in politics as in science to suppose that you can establish a party upon resistance to change; and for this reason, that change is inevitable in a progressive country. *Change is inevitable, but the point is whether that change shall be carried out in deference to the manners, the customs, the laws, the traditions of the people, or whether it shall be carried in deference to abstract principles and arbitrary and general doctrines.* One is a national system; the other, to give it the worst epithet it may deserve, is a philosophical one. But although they both have very great advantages, this must be remembered—the national system is supported no doubt with the fervour of patriotism; the philosophic has a singular exemption from the force of prejudice; but *the national system, although it may occasionally represent the prejudices of a nation, never injures the national character, while the philosophic system, though it may occasionally improve by its advanced views the condition of the country, precipitates progress, and may occasion revolution and destroy states.*"

Certain matters of local and temporary importance, now forgotten, but which at

tion. Nothing of the kind was said by me at Edinburgh. I said there that the Tory party, after the failure of their bill of 1859, had been educated for seven years on the subject of parliamentary reform, and during that interval had arrived at five conclusions, which, with their authority, I had at various times announced, viz. :—

- "1. That the measure should be complete.
- "2. That the representation of no place should be entirely abrogated.
- "3. That there must be a real boundary commission.
- "4. That the county representation should be considerably increased.
- "5. That the borough franchise should be established on the principle of rating.

"This is what I said at Edinburgh, and it is true.

"I am, sir, your obedient servant,

"B. DISRAELI.

"DOWNING STREET. March 6, 1868."

the time created no little stir, next attracted his attention. Sir George Sinclair of Thurso was one of the disaffected Conservatives, and had declined to allow his name to be inserted in the list of stewards of the banquet. The current number of the *Edinburgh Review* had contained a very jubilant article upon the review of the session, in which the "inconsistency" of the Conservatives was very unfavourably compared with the straightforward and honourable course invariably pursued by the Liberals upon the subject of reform; the Tory organ of the *Quarterly Review* had also written a very partial and bitter article, entitled "Conservative Surrender," in which the conduct of Mr. Disraeli was severely handled, whilst the party, under the guidance of their "unscrupulous leader," was charged with yielding all the principles they had formerly maintained. These matters were touched upon by Mr. Disraeli:—

"Pardon," he said, alluding to the desertion of the recalcitrant baronet, "some feeling on my part, when I remember that it is in consequence of my conduct—in consequence of our unprincipled withdrawal of securities and the betrayal of our friends, who insisted upon being betrayed—that I miss to-day the presence of one of my oldest and most valued friends. I should have liked to have been welcomed by his cordial heart, and with the ripe scholarship which no one appreciated more than myself. He has commemorated the withdrawal of his confidence in a letter, which, strange to say, has not a quotation. No one could have furnished a happier one. I can picture him, sir, I can picture him to myself at this moment, in the castellated shades of Thurso, with the *Edinburgh Review* on one side, and on the other the 'Conservative Surrender.' The man who has written the summary of the session in the *Edinburgh* is not mounted, I fear, on the fiery barb of Francis Jeffrey. I should say that the article was written by a very clever man, who has made a very great mistake. I see many gentlemen who have doubtless been, as magistrates, like myself, inspectors

of peculiar asylums. You meet there some cases which I have always thought at the same time the most absurd and the most distressing. It is when the inmate believes that all the world is mad, and that he himself is alone sane. But to pass from such gloomy images, really these *Edinburgh* and *Quarterly Reviews* no one more admires than myself. But I admire them as I do first-class, first-rate post-houses, which in old days, for half a century or so, to use a Manchester phrase, 'carried on a roaring trade.' Then there comes some revolution of progress which nobody can ever have contemplated. They find things are altered. Boots of the 'Blue Bell' and the chambermaid of the 'Red Lion' embrace, and they are quite of accord in this—in denouncing the infamy of railroads."

Mr. Disraeli thus concluded :—"Now, my lords and gentlemen, I have always considered that the Tory party was the national party of England. It is not formed of a combination of oligarchs and philosophers who practise on the sectarian prejudices of a portion of the people. It is formed of all classes, from the highest to the most homely, and it upholds a series of institutions that are in theory, and ought to be in practice, an embodiment of the national requirements and the security of the national rights. Whenever the Tory party degenerates into an oligarchy, it becomes unpopular; whenever the national institutions do not fulfil their original intention, the Tory party becomes odious; but when the people are led by their natural leaders, and when by their united influence the national institutions fulfil their original intention, the Tory party is triumphant, and then, under Providence, will secure the prosperity and the power of the country.

"My lords and gentlemen, the times in which we happen to meet are no doubt serious. . . . I am the last man who would attempt to depreciate the difficulties which a British minister has to meet, or would attempt to exaggerate

the qualities which my colleagues possess. Indeed, when I remember the interests of these British Isles, so vast, so various, and so complicated—when I even recall to recollection the differences of race, which, however blended, leave a very significant characteristic—when I recollect that the great majority of the population of the United Kingdom rise every day and depend for their daily sustenance on their daily labour—when I recollect the delicate nature of our credit, more wonderful in my opinion than all our accumulated capital—when I remember that it is on the common sense, the prudence, and the courage of a community thus circumstanced that depends the fate of uncounted millions in ancient provinces, and that around the globe there is a circle of domestic settlements that watch us for example and inspiration—when I know that not a sun rises upon a British minister that does not bring him care, and even inexpressible anxiety—an unexpected war, a disturbed and discontented colony, a pestilence, a famine, a mutiny, a declining trade, a decaying revenue, a collapse of credit, perhaps some insane and fantastic conspiracy—I declare I feel very often, I wonder where there is the strength of heart to deal with such colossal circumstances. But when I withdraw from the pressure of individual interest, and take a larger and deeper view of human affairs, I recognize that in this country, whatever may have been the tumult and the turmoil of our now almost countless generations, there have been three master influences that have at all times controlled and commanded our powers and passions, and they are *industry*, *liberty*, and *religion*. So long as this sacred combination influences the destiny of this country it will not die; history will recognize its life, not record its decline and fall. It will say, this is a great and understanding people; and it is from such materials we make the magnificence of the nation establish the splendour of the terrestrial globe.'

## CHAPTER IV.

### PRIME MINISTER.

AFTER the wearisome debates and still more wearisome divisions upon the reform bill, members had looked forward to an uninterrupted enjoyment of sport and rest during the recess. Hunting, covert shooting, and pleasant sojourns in southern climes were, however, for a time rudely interfered with by the necessities which compelled ministers to hold a winter session. The arrogance of a savage potentate had forced us to engage in one of our "little wars," and the expenditure that had ensued rendered an appeal to parliament at once advisable. Theodorus, King of Ethiopia, out of pique that a letter which he had despatched to Queen Victoria had remained unanswered, resolved to avenge himself by imprisoning all the Europeans he could lay hands on within his dominions. Among the captives were several British subjects, including Captain Cameron, the English consul at Massowah, and Mr. Rassam, the special envoy of Her Majesty to the ruler of Abyssinia; the remainder of the prisoners were French, Italians, and a few German missionaries engaged in the work of converting the natives of Ethiopia to Christianity. Remonstrances proving in vain with King Theodore, the government at home determined to send a military expedition to Abyssinia, which was to be entirely fitted out in India, and intrusted to the command of Sir Robert Napier, an Indian officer of engineers, afterwards Lord Napier of Magdala. The capital of Abyssinia was Magdala, a fortress crowning a steep and almost impregnable height, and it was within its walls that the captives were confined. The object of the expedition was to march upon this capital, through a wild and dangerous country, and effect the release of the prisoners.

"The sovereign of Abyssinia," said Her Majesty in the speech from the throne at the meeting of the Houses November 19, 1867, "in violation of all international law, continues to hold in captivity several of my subjects, some of whom have been specially accredited to him by myself; and his persistent disregard of friendly representations has left me no alternative but that of making a peremptory demand for the liberation of my subjects, and supporting it by an adequate force. I have accordingly directed an expedition to be sent for that purpose alone; and I confidently rely upon the support and co-operation of my parliament in my endeavour at once to relieve their countrymen from an unjust imprisonment, and to vindicate the honour of my crown." To carry on the necessary operations the sum of two millions was required, and the chancellor of the exchequer lost no time in making his appeal to this addition to the ordinary grant for the ensuing financial year. He passed in rapid review the transactions which had rendered the expedition necessary—the imprisonment of Consul Cameron and Mr. Rassam, the refusal of King Theodore to listen to reason, the negotiations with the Indian government as to the fitting out of an expedition, and the reluctant decision arrived at by the cabinet to resort to force. The interests of the country, however, demanded that the honour of the sovereign should be vindicated.

"I will not," said Mr. Disraeli (November 26, 1867), "dwell upon the high duty of rescuing the subjects of Her Majesty from captivity, because that consideration is really involved in the honour of the crown. I shall not conceal from the House the great reluctance with which Her Majesty's govern-

ment arrived at this resolution. Nothing but the conviction that it was our duty to take such a course would have induced us to come to that decision. It is, I admit, a vexatious thing that we should be obliged to have recourse to arms, in order to control a sovereign like the King of Abyssinia. I feel that if there ever was a case in which a great nation, governed by a sovereign like ours, could show magnanimity and forbearance this was one. Magnanimity and forbearance, however, have limits; for though in public as well as private matters, when an insignificant or an unworthy individual wishes to fasten a quarrel upon you, magnanimity and forbearance would be shown by every right-minded man, we know that practically speaking there is a limit to the exercise of these qualities, which, if persisted in, would assume the character of pettiness and timidity. Now magnanimity and forbearance had in this case been exercised by Her Majesty in an eminent degree. Every pacific means which it was possible to take had been taken by Her Majesty's government. I am not speaking of the present government merely, but of her advisers at all times. We believed, therefore, that the period had arrived when it was absolutely necessary to the interests of this country that there should be a recourse to arms, in order to vindicate the honour of the throne and to obtain that justice without which the possession of power would to my mind have no charms. We must remember that even from the saddest circumstances some useful moral may generally be drawn and some advantage obtained; and I think that in the present instance we may arrive at this conclusion, that hereafter it may be wise to be more cautious in opening relations with sovereigns such as the King of Abyssinia. I cannot help feeling also that when we are going to war, not to obtain territory, not to secure commercial advantages, but for high moral causes—and high moral causes alone—that it is perhaps well in an age like the present, which certainly is distinguished by

an almost absorbing love of wealth and power, that the country should feel, as I believe it does feel, that there is something more precious than power and wealth." Mr. Disraeli concluded by estimating the cost of the expedition at four millions; the sum of two millions, however, was only asked for at present, since that amount could be spent within the financial year, and because if King Theodore should surrender his prisoners without an actual war taking place, two millions would represent the cost of the march to Abyssinia. The estimate, however, fell much below the mark.

The chief opponent to this extra grant was Mr. Lowe. He blamed the government for commencing the war without notice to parliament, and for withholding information from the House during the last session. He disapproved of the expenses of the Indian troops employed in the expedition being charged on the Indian revenues. Then he exaggerated the difficulties the expedition would have to contend with, and predicted that the most dismal consequences would ensue from our rashness. What route, he asked, was to be adopted? Was it true that the base of operations fixed upon was miles away from any water? Was the expedition entered upon with the idea that King Theodore had the prisoners in his possession, or not? If the king had not, there was no use in attacking him in order to rescue them; and if he had, he would most probably retire with them into some part of the country in which it would not be easy to get at him. How would the troops meet the danger to which they would be exposed during the rainy season? The passes were of such a character that men and animals could only proceed in single file, therefore one mule turning restive or one man falling down from sunstroke or illness would stop the advance of the whole force. And so forth, and so forth. The House of Commons is the most patient and grateful of all audiences when special and original information is put before

it, but it has never paid much heed to manufactured erudition and to facts and statistics studied for the express purpose of making a speech. Sir Robert Napier had declared that the march to Magdala, in spite of restive mules, the rainy season, sunstroke, narrow passes, and the rest of it, was perfectly feasible, and members preferred to believe the conclusions of a distinguished soldier rather than to place their faith in the bilious broodings and second-hand references of Mr. Lowe.

The additional grant was agreed to by a large majority, and as this was the chief business for which the House had assembled, parliament was adjourned to the second week of the following February. The year closed amid much depression, owing to the Fenian agitation, the revelations of the intimidation practised by trades-unionists, the strikes in different branches of industry, and the colliery explosions which now sounded throughout the country.

The first subject which attracted the attention of parliament on its re-assembling was the measure introduced by Mr. Disraeli for the prevention of bribery and corruption at elections. Of late years an impression had prevailed in the House of Commons that the electoral committees, whose duty it was to determine the rights of conflicting claimants to a seat and to fathom the iniquities of electoral corruption, did not work well; they were tribunals lacking the judicial qualifications necessary for the labours imposed upon them, and it was feared that their decisions were often not untainted with party bias. A select committee had been appointed to investigate the question, and the result of its examination had been to recommend a thorough change in the law and practice of parliament. The House of Commons had hitherto enjoyed the exclusive right of dealing with the elections of its own members; the member who was unseated for bribery was only unseated by the jurisdiction of the electoral committee, which was com-

posed entirely of members of the House of Commons; and after the same fashion all rival claims to a seat were settled. It was now proposed that the House of Commons should abandon this privilege, and hand over its jurisdiction to the judges of the superior courts at Westminster. The suggestion was approved of both by the representatives and their constituents, when opposition was met with from a quarter which had not been anticipated.

The judges strongly objected to this addition to their duties, and were of opinion that the exercise of such jurisdiction might bring discredit upon their judicial character. The lord chief-justice, the eloquent and discriminating Sir Alexander Cockburn, as the representative of the sentiments of his colleagues, addressed a forcible letter to the lord chancellor upon the change. "In conformity with your lordship's wishes," wrote the lord chief-justice, "I have consulted the judges, and I am charged by them, one and all, to convey to you their strong and unanimous feeling of insuperable repugnance to having these new and objectionable duties thrust upon them. We are unanimously of opinion that the inevitable consequence of putting judges to try election petitions will be to lower and degrade the judicial office, and to destroy, or at all events materially impair, the confidence of the public in the thorough impartiality and inflexible integrity of the judges, when, in the course of their ordinary duties, political matters come incidentally before them. . . . The functions which the judges are called upon to discharge are altogether beyond the scope of the duties which, on accepting the office of judges, we took on ourselves to fulfil. We are at a loss to see how parliament can, with justice or propriety, impose on us labours wholly beyond the sphere of our constitutional duties, and which no one ever contemplated the possibility of our being called upon to perform. I have further to point out, that we are thoroughly



satisfied that the proposed scheme is impracticable, and that the performance by the judges of the onerous duties which this bill proposes to cast on them is neither more nor less than a sheer impossibility. The time of the judges is known to be more than fully occupied. We would venture to ask which court is to be suspended in order to furnish judges even for occasional petitions, to say nothing of the trial of petitions after a general election, when, if any material portion of the work of trying petitions is to be done by the judges, Westminster Hall would have to be shut up altogether? Is a judge to set aside her Majesty's commission, and leave the gaols undelivered, and cases untried, while he is occupied in investigating the unclean doings in a corrupt borough?" The lord chief-justice concluded by recommending that, instead of intruding upon the time of the judges, certain distinguished barristers should be appointed to undertake the trial of election petitions; and he trusted that the lord chancellor, as the head of the profession, would protect the bench, "against this, in every respect, most objectionable measure."

These remonstrances, coming from such a quarter, carried great weight with the government; and it was proposed that the scheme of the select committee should be modified and in the place of the superior judges a court consisting of three persons should be specially appointed for the trial of petitions. It fell to Mr. Disraeli (Feb. 13, 1868) to lay the altered proposal before the House. His speech, as was always his custom when dealing with constitutional subjects, is replete with historical interest. "I rise," he said, "to ask permission of the House to introduce a bill to amend the laws respecting the trial of controverted elections by this House, and also to prevent bribery and corruption at parliamentary elections. The first of these subjects has engaged the attention of the House frequently, I might almost say periodically, for now nearly a century. I need not remind the House

that, within a comparatively modern period of our parliamentary history, petitions with respect to controverted elections to this House were decided by a committee consisting of all the members of the House, and were frequently the subjects of party struggles. It is, I am sure, unnecessary for me to remind the House that the termination of the longest, the most powerful, and perhaps we may say the most prosperous administration that this country ever knew—the administration of Sir Robert Walpole—was brought about by a division upon the Chippenham election petition.\* Even in the time of Sir Robert Walpole there were members of this House who were sensible of the great outrage upon the principles of public justice, and indeed upon the propriety of public life, which took place in consequence of issues of fact and issues of law being decided in such a manner. But the formation of opinion in those days was slow; and more than a quarter of a century elapsed before the strong feeling of the House of Commons permitted one of its members to introduce a measure which boldly struck at this evil. It was indeed, I believe, a predecessor in the seat which I now hold, a member for the county of Buckingham (Mr. George Grenville) who brought in the famous statute which, having by the principle upon which it was founded terminated the system of party struggles upon the subject of controverted elections for nearly a quarter of a century, regulated those matters.

"The principle of the Grenville Act was that a certain number of gentlemen should be chosen by lot to try each petition; and for seventy years afterwards, though altered and amended and in some degree improved, the principle of the

\* The opposition of Sir Robert Walpole to the war with Spain had rendered him very unpopular, for a war with Spain was, as Burke truly described it, a war for plunder. The majority of the minister had rapidly dwindled down to three, and on the occasion of the Chippenham election petition coming before the House even that majority could not be commanded. For the first time for twenty years Walpole found himself in a minority, and accordingly resigned office.

Grenville Act was never departed from. As late as the year 1839, shortly after I entered the House of Commons, election committees were still appointed by lot. At that time the Grenville Act had been so modified that the names of thirty-three gentlemen were drawn from a vase by the clerk at the table; it was open to the petitioner on the one hand, and the respondent on the other, to strike off eleven names from this list, and the residuum of the eleven formed the election committee. Notwithstanding the various improvements which were at different times introduced into the Grenville Act, there were still constant complaints of the unsatisfactory character of the jurisdiction in respect to controverted elections. There were allegations of great and unnecessary expense, of great inconsistency and uncertainty of decision, and of total incapability on the part of the tribunal to prevent the corrupt compromise of petitions which had been presented. In the year 1839 Sir Robert Peel, who was then in Opposition and could give all his time to the subject, devoted his great intelligence and his unrivalled parliamentary knowledge to the question, and brought in a bill the object of which was to improve the jurisdiction of this House with regard to controverted elections, specially by increasing the responsibility of the members of the committees. But notwithstanding that the bill was introduced by Sir Robert Peel, whose intelligence and experience few could rival, it was not successful. It was repealed two years afterwards, and various measures were introduced and amended at various times until in the year 1848 the present procedure was adopted by the House.

"The great object of the Act of 1848 was to give a legal character and shape to the whole procedure with regard to controverted elections. In the first place, the House transferred the whole of its authority to a newly established tribunal called the Committee of Elections, which was composed of six gentlemen appointed

by the speaker by his warrant, but subject to the approbation and sanction of the House. They are gentlemen eminent among us for their high character, their great parliamentary experience, and also for their professional acquirements. The Committee of Elections has the power, under the existing Act, of selecting a committee of four members from the whole body of the House, and a fifth member to act as chairman, from a panel previously selected from those elements of the House which give the best promise of impartial and able supervision and presidency. The members thus selected take their oaths solemnly and in public at this table, to execute justice and maintain the truth. The witnesses are examined on oath, the petitioner and the respondent both appear before the committee by their counsel, the decisions and the precedents of the superior courts are quoted and followed, and the decision of the committee is final and conclusive. I think hon. gentlemen will agree with me that, if we did not depart from the fundamental principle of our present jurisdiction and action in respect of controverted elections, it would be totally impossible to form a tribunal more likely to prove satisfactory or more calculated to arrive at a true verdict on the facts before them. Yet that tribunal has not proved satisfactory, and at no time perhaps have there been more than recently greater complaints and charges against the inefficiency and unsatisfactory character of that tribunal. Every one will admit that notwithstanding all the precautions we have availed ourselves of, as exemplified in the existing Act, the expenditure upon these election petitions has not diminished, but I believe I may say they have been considerably increased; that the decisions of the committees have been uncertain and therefore unsatisfactory; and that they have offered no obstacle whatever to the growing practice of corrupt compromise, by which, in the process of withdrawing petitions, a veil is often thrown over more flagrant transactions

than any which are submitted to scrutiny and investigation."

Such being the case, continued Mr. Disraeli, both the House and the government had come to the conclusion to transfer the jurisdiction of the committees to another tribunal—to the Court of Queen's Bench—and that all the forms of an action at law in a criminal case were to be observed, except that the judge was to be unaided by a jury. That scheme, however, it was not in his power to propose, after the strong expression of opinion passed upon it by Her Majesty's judges. "I know not what the House may feel under these circumstances," proceeded Mr. Disraeli; "but I must say on the part of the government, that having given to this expression of opinion their utmost and most anxious consideration, we have not felt it our duty to advise the House of Commons to thrust those duties upon the judges of the land, or to place themselves—I will not say in collision—but in painful relations to a body so exalted and so much entitled to our reverence and respect. I confess that when I remember that this is a body of men practised in the formation of just opinions, from multifarious circumstances, I could not presume to maintain any opinion contrary to theirs upon such a subject. The idea has never for a moment been permitted to cross our mind, that those who have arrived at what I am sure is their sincere and solemn convictions were influenced in any degree by any considerations of their own personal inconvenience. Although the highest authority has told us that even in Olympian dwellings there are those who are not superior to the infirmities of human nature, I may say on the part of Her Majesty's government that we feel we can no longer attempt to influence the judges in this matter, and that we have received their decision with mortification and disappointment." Since his original scheme was disapproved of by the bench, Mr. Disraeli had come to the conclusion to create a

court composed of three eminent members of the legal profession, who were not only to decide upon all election petitions, but also to hear appeals from the decisions of revising barristers.

To make an end of this subject, we must anticipate a few months. The proposal of the government was neither acceptable to the House nor to the country. Members had no objection to the principle of transference of jurisdiction, but they refused to transfer such authority except to the superior judges: rather, they said, than accept the decision of an inferior tribunal they would retain their power in their own hands. Mr. Disraeli admitted the validity of such objections, and substituted another scheme. He suggested that two judges of one of the superior courts of law at Westminster should be appointed to investigate petitions or controverted elections on the spot; and that to obviate the difficulties raised by the lord chief-justice, such judges should cease to be ordinary judges when appointed to that office, but should become members of the privy council and constitute part of the judicial committee. This scheme was more generally approved of, but on discussion was somewhat modified. Mr. Disraeli proposed that instead of two judges only one judge should be selected, from a rota to be formed by arrangement among the judges of the superior courts, to conduct the trial of election petitions. This modification was accepted and the bill, which was to be limited to three years so as to see how the system worked, eventually became law in the next session.

The exchange from trial by election committees, with their conflicting decisions and strange mode of accepting evidence, to trial by trained judges, practised in all the lore and arts of judicial investigation, has been very beneficial to all the parties concerned. Delay, partiality, expense, and perversion of justice are happily conspicuous by their absence under the new arrangement. The judges make their report, and it appears, according to the rule subsequently laid

down by Mr. Disraeli, that the House of Commons has now no alternative but to accept the decision of the judges and to act upon their conclusions. The sitting member for Stroud had, February, 9, 1875, been declared by the election judge not duly elected; but when the new writ was about to be issued a minority in the House objected to the proceeding. Mr. Disraeli rose up and declared that the House of Commons could not refuse to issue a writ for Stroud without abrogating the Election Petition Act and without asserting the authority of the House "independently of the other estates of the realm." He then referred to the Election Petition Act, and said, "In that Act there were certain powers given to the judges which the House of Commons waived, after ample discussion, after great thought, and with a due sense of the sacrifices they were making. If we were now to announce that because the decision of a judge acting under such authority does not please us, we are to come to a decision contrary to that which according to the provisions of the law has been made public, I can only look upon it that if this motion were carried the authority of that Act would be entirely superseded. I am not prepared, however, to supersede or abrogate that Act. I believe that it has worked well for the country and for the House of Commons." He concluded by trusting that the House would not allow itself to deviate into a path so dangerous and difficult as the one that had been indicated. He was sure if it did it would open up a scene of confusion which would not easily end, and no question of a contest would ever come before the House without some proposition being made, so unconstitutional in its character that the result would be the degradation of the authority of parliament and the reduction of all their powers to make themselves useful to the country. This opinion impressed itself upon the House, and the course advised by Mr. Disraeli was acted upon.

The blue riband of political life was now

to be conferred upon Mr. Disraeli. At last all the difficulties which had barred the path of his advancement were to be surmounted, and he was to receive the reward which his arduous labours and his organizing genius so richly deserved. From Wycombe to Windsor had been a severe intellectual march, testing all the powers of endurance, all the nerve of courage, all the discipline of self-control, all the patience and faith of self-confidence, all the tact and fertility of resource. The end, however, had been reached, and the laurel wreath was to encircle the brows of the victor. The man whose first words in the House of Commons had been drowned in shouts of derision, was now, solely by the aids of a mighty intellect, a rare courage, and a perfect temper, to be not only the leader in the assembly which had scorned him, but of the country which had so frequently misjudged his earnestness and doubted his consistency. The party which had so slowly and jealously given in their adherence to his authority now frankly admitted—save the exception which made the unanimity all the more conspicuous—that their suspicions in the past had been groundless, and that it was by the prescience and directing counsels of their real chief that their body had developed into a formidable power in the state and their principles had been made acceptable to the nation. In the elevation of a man lacking the advantages generally attached to lofty station, the country, too, was to see that the proudest post in the realm was not reserved merely for those of a privileged class, but was open to all who had the genius and the industry to command it. The position occupied by Mr. Disraeli reflected honour not only upon himself, but upon the liberalism, in the best and truest sense of the word, which underlies the institutions of the country.

Lord Derby had been for some time in failing health. His old enemy the gout had been very troublesome; the duties and cares of office harassed him; and he felt that if he was to enjoy the remaining years

that might be spared him, it would be absolutely necessary to be released from all political responsibilities. He tendered his resignation to Her Majesty, and at the same time spoke in the handsomest terms of Mr. Disraeli, pointing him out as the only possible prime minister at that moment who could and ought to lead a Conservative cabinet. The recommendation was at once acted upon. General Grey—the same Grey who had been the successful candidate at High Wycombe in 1832—was despatched from Osborne bearing an autograph letter from the queen to Mr. Disraeli, announcing that he had been selected as successor to Lord Derby, and commanding him ‘to submit what alterations in the cabinet his experience suggested.’ The elevation of the chancellor of the exchequer was received with a chorus of approval. It was felt that, in the absence of Lord Derby, the only statesman whose claims upon the party to lead a Tory administration were indisputable was Mr. Disraeli. “The chancellor of the exchequer,” wrote the *Times*, “has served the Conservative party for more than twenty years. He slowly reconstructed its parliamentary organization, and has thrice brought it into power. By the public he has always been regarded as the ruling spirit of the cabinet, and it has been evident to all men that the reform bill of last session was only carried by his courage, his readiness, and his unfailing temper in the House of Commons. The time has arrived for the servant to become the master; nor could Mr. Disraeli have accepted a lower place without a loss of dignity which would have been unworthy of himself and discreditable to his party.” The incoming prime minister made only a few changes in his cabinet. It was necessary to have an accession of

strength to the debating power in the House of Lords, and Lord Chelmsford was succeeded on the woolsack by the able and eloquent Sir Hugh Cairns, then created Lord Cairns.\* Mr. Ward Hunt stepped into the place at the exchequer vacated by the promotion of Mr. Disraeli. Sir John Pakington was transferred to the war office, and was succeeded at the admiralty by Mr. Corry. Sir John Karslake became attorney-general, with the popular Sir Charles Selwyn as solicitor-general. The other ministerial appointments remained unaltered.

As Mr. Disraeli proceeded on foot from Downing Street to the House of Commons he was warmly cheered by the crowd, which had assembled in the Palace Yard to give him a welcome, and there was not a vacant seat in the popular chamber when he rose to make his personal statement. His speech was short and in the best taste. “I have to ask the House,” he said (March 5, 1868), “to allow me to make a few remarks in consequence of the change which has taken place in my relations to the House since I last had the honour of addressing it. The retirement of Lord Derby from the chief conduct of affairs was unexpected. Personally as well as politically devoted to him, as were his colleagues, they were unreasonable in their expectations, and shrank from realizing the immense loss they must experience from being deprived of his guidance and his services. I have no language which can describe my sense of those services; but I will not attempt for an instant to dilate on the career or character of Lord Derby. I feel that it would be a great want of propriety both in taste and sentiment were I to do so. I hope and believe that Lord Derby will be restored to health, and not only to health

\* There had been no slight put upon Lord Chelmsford by this change. When Lord Chelmsford had been intrusted with the Great Seal he had been made clearly to understand by Lord Derby that at some future time it might become necessary for him to make way for a chancellor of greater debating power, an arrangement which Lord Chelmsford had frankly accepted. Mr. Disraeli had long regarded Sir Hugh Cairns as the ablest man at the bar; and now that he had the opportunity of availing himself of the eloquence of Sir Hugh, he did not scruple to take advantage of the arrange-

ment which had been entered into between Lord Derby and Lord Chelmsford. “We may state on the best authority,” said the *Times*, “that the terms of Mr. Disraeli’s letter to Lord Chelmsford were courteous, and even flattering; stating, in effect, that although Mr. Disraeli could not, from various circumstances, offer the noble lord the position he held in the late administration, yet that it would afford him the greatest pleasure if the noble lord would point out any other mode in which he might request Her Majesty to signify her appreciation of his distinguished services.”

but to enduring health; and in that case he must always exercise in this country that influence over public affairs which is the consequence of his great position and greater character. Least of all should I think it necessary to touch on that character in this House. It is our pride and boast that he lived long amongst us, and that this is the arena in which were disciplined that political experience and those parliamentary accomplishments for which he is so distinguished. I might add that I am here surrounded by many who have a personal recollection of that brilliant perception, of that fiery eloquence, which he certainly possesses more than most of the men I have been acquainted with. If I were—which I will not—to touch on any characteristic of Lord Derby, there is one which I should notice, because it is one of the principal causes of the great grief which his late colleagues experience at this moment, and because it is a trait in his character little known to the world, I mean his great capacity for labour. He was always the most hard-working member of his cabinet; nor do I think that any more lucid master of details ever existed.

"On the retirement of Lord Derby, Her Majesty was most graciously pleased to intrust to me the office of forming a government. Under any circumstances I should think no one, when such a trust has been proposed to him, would not feel that if accepted he must incur a great burden and encounter great difficulties; and though in my case there are personal and peculiar reasons which aggravate that burden and multiply those difficulties, yet I did not think that I could with self-respect refuse an offer of such a character. I trusted to the support of my colleagues; I trusted to the sympathy of a generous party; and perhaps I may be permitted to say, I trusted to receiving fair and impartial treatment from a House of parliament in which I have now passed half of my existence. Under these circumstances I have presumed to undertake the office; and I

am bound in gratitude to all of those who are now my colleagues to express my sense of the generous manner in which they have granted me their assistance.

"In circumstances of this nature, when a new government is formed, it is not unreasonable that the House of Commons should expect some intimation of the principles on which the new administration is established. But I apprehend that in the present instance that desire will be limited and modified; because it is known that, in succeeding to the position of Lord Derby, I have succeeded to the principles on which he established his administration some years ago, and which he has more or less advocated and upheld for the last twenty years, maintaining an unbroken and unswerving course. For twenty years past I have been in confidential co-operation with Lord Derby, and I must, therefore, be cognizant of the principles and opinions he holds on all the great questions of the day. With respect to the foreign policy of the present administration, we shall follow that course which has been pursued under the guidance of my noble friend near me [Lord Stanley], I believe I may say, with the approbation of parliament, and I think I may add, with the confidence of Europe. That policy is a policy of peace—not of peace at any price for the mere interests of England, but a policy of peace from the conviction that such a policy is for the general interests of the world. We do not believe that that policy is likely to be secured by a selfish isolation on the part of this country; but, on the contrary, we believe it may be secured by sympathy with other countries, not merely in their prosperous fortunes, but in their anxieties and troubles. If such a policy be continued I have no doubt, when the occasion may arise—and periodical occasions will arise when the influence of England is necessary to maintain the peace of the world—that influence will not be found inefficient, because it is founded on respect and regard. With reference to our

domestic policy I say at once that the present administration will pursue a liberal policy. I mean a truly liberal policy—a policy that will not shrink from any changes which are required by the wants of the age we live in, but will never forget that it is our happy lot to dwell in an ancient and historic country, rich in traditionary influences, that are the best security for order and liberty, and which form the most valuable element of our national character and our national strength.” Mr. Disraeli then concluded by deploring the miserable condition of Ireland, but regretted that it was absolutely necessary, as a means of protecting the Irish people from the machinations of an unprincipled foreign confederacy, still to maintain the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act.

The condition of Ireland was now the first question which attracted the attention of the government. Turbulent and disaffected as had been the state of that unhappy island during this century, it had seldom been in a situation more calculated to create anxiety and alarm than at that period. Troops garrisoned her county towns, men-of-war were anchored in her harbours ready for any emergency, while cruisers sailed around her coast to protect her shores from transatlantic invaders. The Habeas Corpus Act was suspended, but it was evident that in spite of all the precautions of the government the Irish, aided by funds from America and exasperated by the inflammatory teaching of the Fenians, were only biding their time to unite in a general rising against English rule. An important debate on the condition of Ireland was ushered in by Mr. Maguire, one of the members for Cork, who moved for a committee to inquire into the state of the sister isle. He took the view familiar to us all at the present day. He held that England was bound either to pursue a just and enlightened policy towards Ireland, or to allow her to govern herself. The chief causes which were at the root of Irish discontent, he asserted, were the land

grievance and the existence of the established church. Until the tenant got security for his improvements and was protected from the rapacity and caprice of his landlord, it would be in vain to hope for tranquillity. It was useless to issue another royal commission, for Ireland would not be content with anything short of a practical redress of her grievances. He called upon the House to deal with the Irish difficulty in a comprehensive and patriotic spirit; by so doing they would conciliate all classes of the people, extirpate Fenianism, and lay the foundation of a state of things which would redeem a nation and save an empire.

In answer to this appeal, Lord Mayo, the chief secretary for Ireland, stated the view which the government took of the condition of Ireland. He did not deny that much discontent and disloyalty prevailed, but he argued that those feelings were confined to a much lower class than had been known in similar periods of disaffection. All the landed gentry and all the classes largely interested in trade had held scornfully aloof from Fenianism; it was only among the peasantry and the artisans in the large towns that the movement had taken root. The real strength of Fenianism lay in the United States; and if the connection with the States could be cut off for a few months, the conspiracy would collapse. Lord Mayo then denied that Ireland was an oppressed country, and misruled by England for the benefit of Englishmen. If Ireland was tyrannized over the tyrants were Irishmen, for the whole of the executive—the bench, the municipal authorities, and the constabulary—were in the hands of the Irish, and a more exclusively national government it was impossible to create. Nor was it true that Ireland was a decaying country. Within the last twenty years there had been a great increase in the acreage under cultivation, in the value of live stock, and in other agricultural produce; wages also had risen, roads had been improved, railway communication

had been extended, and crime and pauperism had much diminished. That improvement the government proposed to encourage. A bill would shortly be brought in which, providing an easy means of securing compensation for improvements, would increase the leasing powers of limited owners and would contain provisions for the encouragement of written contracts. With regard to education, it was proposed to confer a charter on a new Catholic university. Touching the Irish Church, that church was then being inquired into by a commission appointed at the instance of Earl Russell, and until the report had been issued it was impolitic to deal with the subject. If the equalization of church establishments in Ireland were demanded, it must be done by the process of *levelling upwards, and not downwards*. The overthrow of the Church in Ireland would alienate many friends, whilst it would fail to conciliate a single enemy. Lord Mayo concluded by deprecating the adoption of rash or precipitate measures.

The debate was continued for four nights, and most of the leading members of the House took part in the discussion. Mr. Horsman strongly objected to the Irish policy of the government. On the church question it was, he said, inaction, on the land question procrastination, and on education retrogression. The establishment of a Roman Catholic university would simply encourage the propagation of Ultramontane doctrines, both in religion and politics. Never, declared Mr. Horsman, could Ireland be ruled without coercion until the principle of religious equality had been adopted, until the feeling of insecurity which was driving the tenant farmers from the country had been removed, and until all classes were united in one great system of unsectarian education. Mr. Lowe, whilst approving generally of the policy of the government, regretted the determination not to touch the Irish Church; it was a scandalous misappropriation to devote the revenues of the church

exclusively to the religion of less than ten per cent. of the population. Mr. Mill was of opinion that the great want of Ireland was security of tenure. Mr. Bright desired the disestablishment and disendowment of all churches alike; the *regium donum* should go as well as the Maynooth grant;\* the whole of the church property, he said, being Irish property, it should be disposed of in accordance with the desires of the Irish people.

Towards the close of the debate, on the fourth night, Mr. Gladstone addressed the House. The elevation of his rival to the post of premier seemed to have sharpened the spiteful jealousy with which he was ever accustomed to regard the position and actions of Mr. Disraeli; and in order to gratify his spleen, he was prepared in a moment to sacrifice the convictions of a lifetime. The Liberal party were divided, but upon one point they were united—the disestablishment of the Irish Church. No statesman had more earnestly advocated the union of church and state and the evils consequent upon a policy of disestablishment than Mr. Gladstone. As the young Tory member for Newark he had written a work warmly, and almost illogically, upholding the necessity of the existence of an established church where a state is actuated by religious motives. He had, within a few months of his scandalous apostasy and nefarious bid for power, stoutly maintained

\* The Roman Catholic College of St. Patrick at Maynooth, in the county of Kildare, was founded in 1795, according to the provisions of an Act of the Irish parliament, for the education of persons destined for the Roman Catholic priesthood. It was built at a cost of £32,000, and was supported by an annual parliamentary grant. A lay college was opened in 1802, dependent on voluntary subscriptions. But in 1845 the college was placed on a new footing, and permanently endowed for the maintenance and education of 500 students and twenty senior scholars. The *regium donum*, or royal gift, to the amount of £600, was granted in 1672, as secret service money, by Charles II., to be distributed annually among the Presbyterian clergy of Ireland. Having been discontinued, it was renewed in 1690 by William III., who increased the gift to £1200. George I. granted a considerable sum for the relief of ministers belonging to the Presbyterians, Independents, and Baptists in 1728. The gift was further augmented to £2200 in 1784, to £5000 in 1792, and to £88,953 in 1856. On the disestablishment of the Irish Church both the Maynooth grant and the *regium donum* were abolished.



that neither the position nor the revenues of the Irish Church ought to be tampered with. Let us support this assertion by a few quotations from his published works, his speeches, and his correspondence.

In his work, "The State in its Relations with the Church," published in 1838, Mr. Gladstone had thus written of the Irish Church:—"A common form of faith binds the Irish Protestants to ourselves, while they upon the other hand are fast linked to Ireland; and thus they supply the most natural bond of connection between the two countries. But if England, by overthrowing their church, should weaken their moral position, they would be no longer able—perhaps no longer willing—to counteract the desires of the majority, tending under the direction of their leaders, however, by a wise policy revocable from that fatal course, to what is termed national independence." Again, in the same work Mr. Gladstone had said—"He had no hesitation in stating that he considered the established church [in Ireland] the great bond of union between the two countries; *and if ever that unfortunate event should arrive when they should rashly lay their hands on the property of the church to rob it of its rights, that would seal the doom and separate the connection between the two countries.*" Three years earlier, in a speech upon the Appropriation clause, Mr. Gladstone had thus refuted a very popular notion. "The great grievance complained of in Ireland was that the Protestant establishment there was paid for by the Roman Catholic inhabitants. Was it so paid for? Were tithes paid for that purpose, or were not tithes rather a part of the surplus profit of the land, which went not to the cultivator of the soil, but to the owner of it? Tithe was paid by the landlord, and the grievances on this point complained of by the people of Ireland were rather in theory than in reality."

We make one further quotation, and it shall be of a later date. Dr. Hannah, the warden of Glenalmond, Perthshire,

after a certain section of the Liberal party had been agitating for the disestablishment of the Irish Church, was anxious to ascertain the views of Mr. Gladstone upon the subject. The divine received the following reply—"It would be very difficult for me," wrote Mr. Gladstone (June 9, 1865), "to subscribe to any interpretation of my speech on the Irish Church like that of your correspondent, which contains so many conditions and bases of a plan for dealing with a question *apparently remote*, and at the same time full of difficulties on every side. My reasons are, I think, plain. First, because the *question is remote, and apparently out of all bearing on the practical politics of the day*; I think it would be for me worse than superfluous to determine upon any scheme or basis of a scheme with respect to it. Secondly, because it is difficult; even if *I anticipated any likelihood of being called upon to deal with it*, I should think it right to take no decision beforehand on the mode of dealing with the difficulties. But the first reason is that which chiefly weighs. As far as I know, my speech signifies pretty clearly the broad distinction which I make between the abstract and the practical views of the subject. And I think I have stated strongly my sense of the responsibility attaching to the opening of such a question, except in a state of things which gave promise of satisfactorily closing it. For this reason it is that I have been so silent about the matter, and may probably be so again; but I could not as a minister and as member for Oxford allow it to be debated an indefinite number of times and remain silent. One thing, however, I may add, because I think it a clear landmark. In any measure dealing with the Irish Church, I think (*though I scarcely expect ever to be called on to share in such a measure*) the Act of Union must be recognized and must have important consequences, especially with reference to the position of the hierarchy." The letter concluded with the hope that Dr. Hannah would "see and approve my reasons for

not wishing to carry *my own* mind further into a *question lying at a distance I cannot measure.*" Thus from 1835 to 1865 we have it in evidence that Mr. Gladstone had no intention of carrying out those schemes which three years later he brought into such prominence.

The cry of disestablishment was, however, too serviceable for party ends and interested motives not to be taken advantage of, and Mr. Gladstone, in spite of all past professions to the contrary, loudly sounded it; and as its brazen tones fell upon his once disaffected followers, divisions ceased and intestine feuds were silenced. As Paris to Henry IV. was well worth a mass, so to the leader of the Opposition the Treasury bench was well worth bidding for at the expense of principles which until recently had been somewhat ostentatiously proclaimed.

Mr. Gladstone accused the government of failing to realize the grave fact that a crisis in the Irish question had been reached. Ireland had been exhausted by emigration, the liberties of her subjects had been constantly interfered with by the repeated suspension of the Habeas Corpus, and Fenianism had now invaded England. He discussed at length the Irish policy of the government, and deemed it thoroughly unsatisfactory. But the key-note of his opposition was sounded when, amid thundering cheers from his supporters, he declared that *the Church of Ireland as a state church must cease to exist.* Such a task, he said, was not beyond the courage and the statesmanship of the British legislature. He concluded by recommending Mr. Maguire to withdraw his motion. Should the prime minister not satisfy the wishes of the House, it would be the duty of the Opposition to ask for a decided opinion upon the question before them. Ireland must now see that parliament was in stern earnest in the matter.

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Disraeli brought the debate to an end (March 16, 1868). He began by stating that all the evils complained of by Mr.

Gladstone had been in existence when the Liberals were in power, and yet nothing had then been done to redress them. "Sir, the right hon. gentleman, when he rose to-night, made a charge against the government. He made at the same time an announcement of startling importance; for he told us that the crisis of Ireland had arrived, and that the measures of Her Majesty's government had proved that they did not realize that fact. And as the right hon. gentleman proceeded it appeared that the crisis of Ireland which has just arrived was the culminating point of a controversy which had existed for seven hundred years. I could not but feel that I was indeed the most unfortunate of ministers, since at the moment when I arrived by Her Majesty's gracious favour at the position I now fill, a controversy which had lasted for seven hundred years had reached its culminating point, and I was immediately called upon with my colleagues to produce measures equal to such a supernatural exigency. I was very anxious to know what could be the circumstances which had brought about a conjuncture so startling and unprecedented. I watched with interest the right hon. gentleman as he proceeded; and when, as I thought, with dangerous candour he began to intimate to the House the elements of the portentous crisis, it appeared that the first of the elements was the existence of Fenianism. But I am not aware that Her Majesty's government are peculiarly responsible for the existence of Fenianism. When we acceded under the auspices of Lord Derby to office, two short years ago, Fenianism existed, and the suspension of the liberties of the people of Ireland had taken place under the auspices and advice of the right hon. gentleman. He was himself a member of the government to whom the fatal secret of Fenianism was first communicated, and he came down to this House to propose those extra-legal remedies with which the country is now too familiar. This is the first element of the crisis. Therefore, so far as the first element

of the crisis is concerned, the right hon. gentleman did not feel at that moment the necessity of the violent course which he recommended at the conclusion of his oration this evening.

"But the right hon. gentleman proceeded to say that there was another cause and another element which had produced this awful crisis. And what was that? It was Irish emigration which had brought about this critical state of affairs, and which called for these instantaneous and violent remedies. The right hon. gentleman, however, himself admitted that the emigration from Ireland had somewhat subsided. There certainly was a time when the emigration was greater than at present, and when the announcement from Ireland of the thinning of its population excited alarm and apprehension in this House and throughout the country. And who was one of the ministers, and one of the most influential ministers of England, during all that period? The right hon. gentleman. With two of the elements of his crisis the right hon. gentleman was as silent as a mouse the whole time. He never made this arraignment of the Church of Ireland, which indeed for many years he vindicated with so much eloquence and power of reasoning, and he never for a moment alluded to the critical state of affairs. There was also a third element of the crisis; and what was that? It was the education of the people of Ireland. But the people of Ireland were not educated only yesterday. The people of Ireland have had for a considerable period the advantage of a system of education under circumstances more favourable than the people of England have had. For thirty years, more or less, the people of Ireland have had great advantages of popular education, and the fruits of that education certainly within the last ten years have been very perceptible. But although everybody is perfectly conscious of the beneficial effects of education in Ireland, the right hon. gentleman, notwithstanding he was so con-

versant with all the consequences of education in that country, never came forward until now to state that the education of the people of Ireland necessitated the course which he has suddenly called upon the House to take. But there was one more element, and that completes all the ingredients of this awful crisis. And what is that? The parliamentary reform bill, which fortunately, and in spite of the efforts of the right hon. gentleman, was passed last year. That is the fourth element of the crisis, and in consequence of that you are to destroy the Irish Church. . . . These are the four ingredients which the right hon. gentleman has brought before us, as accounting for a state of affairs which he describes as the crisis of Ireland; all the elements of the crisis being elements of a somewhat obsolete character, and having no evident relation to the course which he recommends."

Mr. Disraeli then proceeded to defend the programme of the government as announced by Lord Mayo, using very much the same arguments as the Irish secretary had employed. Upon the question of the Irish Church he spoke at some length. "The established Church of Ireland," he said, "is, I frankly admit at once, not in the condition in which I should wish to see a national church. The condition in which I should wish to see a national church would be this—that the whole population of the country should be in communion with it. That would be a perfect and completely national church. But in a land where complete toleration fortunately flourishes, that is not an ideal of a church that will probably be ever realized. Well, then, we must advance to the position of an established church which is not supported by the whole population of the country, but by only a part of it. That in my view would still be a very great advantage. I think there is nothing that we should be more deeply impressed with than the importance of connecting the principle of religion with government. If you once divorce political authority from

the principle of religion, I do not see what you can come to but a mere affair of police. If you admit that it is wise to connect the principle of religion with government, the mind is naturally brought to endowment. It is the practical mode of carrying the system into operation. It gives a corporate character to the religious principles which influence men."

Such a church, continued Mr. Disraeli, steadied faith and was a bulwark alike against incredulity and fanaticism. He was in favour of the principle of endowment; nor did he consider that principle opposed to the Irish character and disposition. The Irish were essentially a religious race. "If there is a people," said Mr. Disraeli, "who may be described as the most religious people in the world, it is the people of Ireland. It is there no affair of race; and whether a man be Presbyterian, or Anglican, or Roman, religion is one of the great elements of his life, and the day does not pass without religious convictions exercising an immense influence over his actions. Now, I say that a religious people will always be in favour of ecclesiastical endowments. They may quarrel among themselves upon particular points, but a religious people will always be in favour of co-operations that give importance and precision to their convictions; and therefore I think that we are embarking in a very dangerous course when, at a period at which no one could have anticipated it, a right hon. gentleman of great standing in the country comes forward suddenly, as it were from ambush, and announces that he proposes to destroy an institution which he has himself often advocated, and which he has told us to-night has existed from the time of the Tudors." Mr. Disraeli then begged members of the House to realize the gravity of the question. Let them, he said, not be hurried into a decision which, if carried out and followed to its consequences, would give a new colour to their society, and alter all the principles upon which they and

their forefathers had acted for years. They should not decide upon such a question without an appeal to the nation. If the Church of Ireland were violently abolished, such an act would add immensely to the elements of discord in that country. He objected, therefore, to any proposal for the destruction of the established church in Ireland. Then, mindful of what years ago he had said as to an "absentee aristocracy and an alien church," he thus defended himself\* :—

"I have been reminded in the course of this debate of expressions which I used five-and-twenty years ago. I could remind other gentlemen of expressions they used on the same subject five-and-twenty years ago; but I do not much care for that sort of thing. With reference, however, to that passage which has been quoted from a speech made by me, I may remark that it appeared to me at the time I made it that nobody listened to it. It seemed to me that I was pouring water upon sand, but it seems now that the water came from a golden goblet. With regard to the passage from that speech there are many remarks which, if I wanted to vindicate or defend myself, I might legitimately make. I might remind the House that speech was made *before the famine and the emigration from Ireland*, and the whole of that passage about the starving people and the amount of population to the square mile no longer applies. I might remark that speech was made *before the change in locomotion and the sale of a large portion of the soil of Ireland*, which has established a resident proprietary instead of an absentee aristocracy; though, so far as I can collect, the absentee aristocracy seems more popular than the resident proprietary. All this I might say;

\* See vol. i., p. 70. Mr. Bright had alluded to this speech. "The prime minister himself," he said (March 18, 1868), "in speaking of it, called it an 'alien church.' Bear that phrase in mind. It is a strong phrase—a phrase we can all understand—and we know that the right honourable gentleman is a great master of phrases. He says a word upon something; it sticks; we all remember it, and this is sometimes a great advantage. 'Alien church' is . . . the name he gives it." Mr. Bernal Osborne also twitted the prime minister upon having employed the phrase.

but I do not care to say it, and I do not wish to say it, because in my conscience the sentiment of that speech was right. It may have been expressed with the heedless rhetoric which, I suppose, is the appanage of all who sit below the gangway; but in my historical conscience the sentiment of that speech was right." Mr. Disraeli concluded by expressing his approval of the measure the government were about to introduce; he believed they were on the eve of a policy for Ireland which would reconcile races, settle a community, and terminate the sorrows of afflicted centuries. At the request of the leader of the Opposition, Mr. Maguire withdrew his motion, expressing himself as being quite satisfied with the result of the debate.

Mr. Gladstone was not slow to carry out his resolve, and to exhibit on the occasion the ardour and vindictiveness peculiar to the renegade who denounces what he once devoutly upheld. A week after the debate on the condition of Ireland, Mr. Gladstone gave notice of his intention to move the now historical resolutions. These resolutions were three in number:—

"First, that in the opinion of this House it is necessary that the established church of Ireland should cease to exist as an establishment—due regard being had to all personal interests and to all individual rights of property;

"Secondly, that subject to the foregoing considerations it is expedient to prevent the creation of new personal interests by the exercise of any public patronage, and to confine the operations of the ecclesiastical commissioners of Ireland to objects of immediate necessity or individual rights pending the final decision of parliament;

"And third, that an address be presented to Her Majesty humbly to pray, that with a view to the purposes aforesaid Her Majesty be graciously pleased to place at the disposal of parliament her interest in the temporalities of the archbishoprics, bishoprics, and other ecclesiastical dignities and benefices in Ireland and in the custody thereof."

Mr. Disraeli expressed his desire to meet the attack of the leader of the Opposition at the earliest opportunity, and fixed Monday, March 30, 1868, as the date for the commencement of the debate. During the

interval that ensued between the moving of the resolutions and the elaborate discussion that was to take place upon them, the country was much agitated. Conservative associations were busy circulating pamphlets and getting up meetings, so as to prepare the country for the grave revolution in the constitution that was meditated. The Anglican clergy, who regarded the attack upon the Irish establishment as the precursor of their own overthrow, were loud in their denunciations of the leader of the Opposition and of the wrecking policy of the Liberal party. The fall of the Irish Church, it was vehemently asserted, was the thin end of the wedge, which was to split up the English constitution and lead to the severance of church and state, the confiscation of ecclesiastical property, the downfall of the House of Peers, a raid upon the landed interest, and even to an attack upon the stability of the throne. Constituents implored members who represented their views to be firm and united in resisting the insidious advances of the enemy; and addresses from Conservative societies poured in upon ministers approving of their policy and encouraging them in their resolve to oppose the tactics of the democratic element.

In response to an address from the Conservative and Constitutional Association to this effect, Mr. Disraeli wrote to Lord Dartmouth, the president:—"We have heard something lately of the crisis of Ireland. In my opinion, the crisis of England is rather at hand; for the purpose is now avowed, and that by a powerful party, of destroying that *sacred union between the church and state which has hitherto been the chief means of our civilization, and is the only security for our religious liberty.*" In reply to another address, Lord Derby thus alluded to the confidence he reposed in his successor as the leader of the national party:—"It was not without a pang, and only under a conviction of the absolute necessity of the step, that I found myself compelled to ask permission to withdraw from the service of a sovereign to whose gracious favour I am so

deeply indebted, and to sever my official connection with a party which for so many years has honoured me with its confidence, and for many members of which I entertain a personal as well as political regard. It was, however, very satisfactory to me to be empowered to transfer the office which I had the honour of holding to one whose co-operation and friendship I had enjoyed for more than twenty years, and who, I am persuaded, will prove himself not unmindful of those great constitutional principles which it has been the study of my life to uphold, and to which, so far as my health will permit, I shall not cease to give my earnest, though unofficial support."

On all sides the position and future of the Irish Church was the one absorbing topic of discussion. It was as warmly attacked by those who sought its degradation, as it was upheld by its advocates and supporters. The question admitted of two interpretations, each diametrically opposed to the other. According to the Liberals, who were almost universally in favour of disestablishment, the Irish Church as it then existed was an act of injustice towards the rest of Ireland. It was estimated that the Episcopalians in Ireland in connection with the church numbered scarcely more than some 600,000 persons, and yet for that small population two archbishops and twelve bishops were maintained, with the command of a capital of nearly £12,000,000 sterling. The objects too, it was asserted, for which the Irish Church had been established had failed. As a religious institution it had been a deplorable mistake. "The original hope," said Mr. Bright, "clearly was that the people of Ireland would be drawn from the Church of Rome and brought into harmony with the Church of England; but I venture to say that, from the time of the establishment of the Protestant Church in Ireland until now, it could not be shown, reckoning the people as all Catholics on the one side and Protestants on the other, that you have really added by a hundred persons, perhaps not by one

person, to the number of Protestants. The thing has been an entire failure, and deplorable and ludicrous as an engine for converting the Catholics. It has not only not made the Catholics in Ireland Protestant, but it has made them more intensely Roman than they are found to be in almost any other country of Europe or America. I think it could be demonstrated that the existence of the Protestant Church in Ireland, be it missionary or not in pretence, has not only not converted the Catholics, but it has made it absolutely impossible that anybody else could convert them; because, if you look and see how the Protestant Church is connected with the state and with the politics of the country, with supremacy, the landed proprietary, the Protestant party, and all the dark records of past time, you may understand that its effect has been to make Catholicism in Ireland not only a faith, but absolutely patriotism; and I might ask everyone who now hears me whether, if he and his forefathers had been placed in Ireland as the Catholic population there have been placed, he would not have felt that to throw off his allegiance to his own co-religionists, and to enter the portals of the garrison church, would have been not only a change of faith, but a denial almost of his birth and country."

Nor, it was alleged, as a political institution had the Irish Church been a success. As it had failed to convert the Roman Catholics, so, declared the Liberals, it had failed to secure the Union. Agitation, disaffection, and hostility to England were as rife as ever throughout the southern and western counties of the Emerald Isle. And the cause of this feeling was to be traced to the existence of the church of the minority being created the church of the majority. The Church in Ireland was the church of conquest, for by no possibility, it was asserted, could the church of a small minority of Protestants remain for 300 years established in the midst of a nation of Papists except by the power of conquest.

Hence Roman Catholicism had become all the stronger from the hatred with which the poor Irish regarded the religion of their oppressors. Every attempt at conversion had failed, and intense was the bitterness that had been created between the Protestant landlord and the Popish peasant. For 300 years there had been a perpetual protest against such a state of things on the part of the people of Ireland. To the Irish, Protestant ascendancy had been associated for the last three centuries with every form of injustice of which Ireland had complained, whether connected with the confiscation of Irish soil, or with the terrors and cruelties of the penal code, or with the administration of the law. The Irish Church was to the Irish Catholics the representative of the causes of their miseries, and a sign of defeat and oppression, which only exasperated their sufferings and made their humiliation more keenly felt. Without the disestablishment of the Irish Church, it was useless to expect that the relations between England and Ireland could be other than they had been in the past.

"When I look at this measure of disestablishment," said Mr. Bright, "I look at it as tending to a more true and solid union between Ireland and Great Britain. I see it giving tranquillity to our people, greater strength to the realm, and new lustre and new dignity to the crown. I dare claim for this bill the support of all thoughtful and good people within the bounds of the British empire, and I cannot doubt that it will be accompanied by the blessing of the Supreme in its beneficent results; for I believe it to be founded upon those principles of justice and of mercy which are the glorious attributes of His eternal reign." We know how these pious anticipations have been realized. Since the disestablishment of the Irish Church the condition of Ireland has steadily deteriorated—the mischievous power of the priests has been strengthened, outrages of the most terrible character have been of frequent

occurrence, rebellion has stalked through the land openly proclaiming revolt, and never has it been more necessary to make appeal to the severities of Coercion Acts. The remedy, instead of curing the disease, has developed it and made the malady infectious.

The Conservative party entertained a very different view as to the benefits to be derived from the dethroning of the Irish Church. Such spoliation, they said, could only be effected at the expense of the coronation oath and the Act of Union. It was true that what one parliament created another might destroy; but the Irish Church was not the creature of an Act of parliament—it was the result of a solemn treaty entered into between England and the then Irish parliament, and the legislation with respect to it was merely the seal and the ratification of the treaty. According to that treaty it was proposed by the Irish ministry "That the Church of England and Ireland, as now by law established, be united into one Protestant Episcopal Church, to be called the United Church of England and Ireland, and that the continuance and preservation of the said United Church of England and Ireland shall be deemed and taken to be an essential part of the Union." The treaty, in short, bound up the established church of Ireland with the constitution, and until the constitution was destroyed the maintenance of the Irish Church would have to remain a perpetual obligation on the state. Abolish the Irish Church, they cried, and the Union was in jeopardy. "I feel," said the famous Lord Plunket, "that the Protestant establishment of Ireland is the very cement of the Union. I find it interwoven with all the essential relations and institutions of the two kingdoms, and I have no hesitation in admitting that if it were destroyed the very foundations of public security would be shaken, the connection between England and Ireland dissolved, and the annihilation of private property must follow the ruin of the property of the church."

Why, then, asked the Conservatives

as the Church in Ireland to be disestablished? It was answered that the existence of the Irish Church was a grievous injustice, because it possessed property that was wrongfully taken from the Roman Catholics. But if appeal were made to the ancient history of the Irish Church, it was evident that the property of the Protestant Church in Ireland had never been in the possession of the Roman Catholic Church. The church of the minority had never encroached upon the funds of the majority. "I do not believe," said the eloquent bishop of Peterborough, "that one shilling of the tithe rent-charge, or that one acre of glebe land in Ireland ever belonged to the church of the majority. Tithe was paid for the first time within the pale after the synod of Cashel, when the Church of Ireland, though the Roman Catholic Church, was the church of the Anglican minority; and the Ulster glebes were given to the Protestants of Ulster surely at a time when it was distinctly known that the Protestant Church was the church of the minority. *I contend that the church of the minority, standing on the land of the minority, teaching the faith of the minority, paid by the minority, is not guilty of that misappropriation of the funds of the majority with which it is charged.*" To disestablish the Irish Church, said the Conservatives, would be a policy most unsound. It would create disaffection among the loyal Irish Protestants, and cause the Popish peasant in Ireland to sink into a deeper darkness, owing to the absence of that elevating and civilizing influence then exercised by the more highly educated Protestant clergy. It was a precedent fraught with every danger. The disestablishment of the Irish Church would lead eventually to the disestablishment of the Church in England, and of the Church in Scotland. It was the beginning of the end; confiscate the property of the church and the confiscation of the land would follow. There was no necessity for the measure. The Irish Protestant clergy had done their work excellently well during

the last fifty years, and were honoured and trusted by the peasantry, even by the Roman Catholic peasantry, around them. There had been no cry for disestablishment, for no one had wished it or asked for it.\* The Liberals were, however, fighting among themselves, and thoroughly disorganized; and a measure to disestablish the Irish Church was a cunning party move eminently calculated to restore peace and harmony among the split-up sections of the Opposition.†

So argued the Conservative party, and recent events across St. George's Channel have proved how accurately they foretold the results which would follow the disestablishing of the Irish Church. It has impoverished the Protestant clergy without gratifying the Popish peasant; it has endangered the Union, for never was the demand for Home Rule among the Irish more angry and more unanimous; it has excited the Roman Catholic hierarchy to plead for further favours, and to become mutinous on refusal; and it has led to the agitation of the Land League, and to the infamous attacks upon the rights of the landlord. The church has fallen, the land is to follow her example. "Revolutions," said Dr. Magee, "commence with sacrilege and go on to communism; or, to put it in the more gentle and euphemistic language of the day, revolutions begin with the church and go on to the land."

On the memorable Monday Mr. Gladstone rose, in a House crowded in every part, to bring forward his resolutions. He began by formally moving that the Acts relating to the Irish Church be read. This

\* "We are of those who think that the notion of settling the Irish Church question by simply confiscating the property of the Protestant Church, and abolishing its principles, is a foolish notion, and ought to be opposed as foolish, futile, and wrong."—*Tablet*, May, 1867.

† "We hear it openly avowed that this move was wanted in order to re-unite the Liberal party. Those who compose that party are, it is said, so divided in their opinions that something of this sort was absolutely necessary to bring them together, and that a flag has thus been raised under which they will all rally. I would venture to ask you whether you really think that this is justifiable? Is it right that Ireland should wantonly be made the battlefield of parties?"—*Earl Grey to John Bright*.



request was at once met by a motion that the Act of Union be read. Some discussion arose, and it was eventually agreed that only such clauses of that Act as touched upon the Irish Church should be read, which was accordingly done.\* At the wish of a member the Act of William and Mary, prescribing the coronation oath, was also read. These preliminaries settled, the leader of the Opposition then moved that the House go into committee on the resolutions of which he had given notice. Mr. Gladstone was, however, not to proceed on his work of destruction unchecked. Lord Stanley now moved—"That this House, while admitting that considerable modifications in the temporalities of the United Church in Ireland may, after the pending inquiry, appear to be expedient, is of opinion that any proposition tending to the disestablishment or disendowment of that church ought to be reserved for the decision of the new parliament."

The debate lasted four nights, and was characterized by much eloquence, passion, and party personalities. Mr. Gladstone declared that the time had come when the established Church in Ireland should cease to exist as an establishment. There ought to be an end in Ireland to all endowments, and to all grants from the consolidated fund, to any religious denomination whatever. With regard to the residue, every just claim should be satisfied, and then the surplus treated as an Irish fund applicable to the exclusive benefit of Ireland. "What we have had and have to do," he said in conclusion, "is to consider well and deeply before we

take that first step in an engagement such as this; but having entered into the controversy we must quit ourselves like men, and make every effort to remove what still remains of the scandal and calamity of the relations between England and Ireland, and use our best exertions to build up with the cement of honour and concord the noble fabric of the British empire." Lord Stanley urged the House to adopt his resolution. He frankly admitted that the ecclesiastical establishment of Ireland was not all that it should be, and that there were scandals in it which ought to be removed; but at the same time he advised that all legislation in the matter should be reserved for a new parliament. The work of the session was sufficient for the session, without entering upon an Irish Church agitation. Whenever action was necessary the government would not be unprepared for it; but action at that time was impossible, and ministers objected in any way to pledging the judgment of the next parliament.

Lord Cranbourne was very bitter against the amendment, and charged the cabinet with ambiguous motives. He expressed himself as a stanch advocate of the principle of establishments, and would not be false to that principle; disestablishment would simply irritate and insult the feelings of one-third of the population in Ireland, and that the wealthiest and most influential. He described the amendment as "a more than Delphic resolution," since it gave no clue to the policy of the cabinet. Remembering the events of last year, could the declarations of any subordinate minister, he asked, give a satisfactory pledge for the course Mr. Disraeli might adopt? In 1865 Lord Stanley had seconded a resolution which, like the one then before the House, made general admissions and pleaded for delay, and the end of it was—household suffrage. If the present amendment were carried, was the House sure that the Irish Protestant members would not be found, perhaps next year, voting humbly with Mr. Disraeli for

\* "By the fifth article of the Union it is declared that the continuance and preservation of the said United Church, as the established Church of England and Ireland, shall be deemed and taken to be an essential and fundamental part of the Union. By fundamental is meant with reference to the subject-matter, such an integral part of the compact of union formed between the two kingdoms as is absolutely necessary to the support and sustaining of the whole fabric and superstructure of the union raised and built thereupon; and such as being removed would produce the ruin and overthrow of the political union founded upon this article as its immediate basis."—*Lord Ellenborough, House of Lords, May 18, 1806.*

the disestablishment of the Irish Church? The ambiguity of the amendment indicated either no policy at all, or a policy which ministers were afraid to avow. He condemned such a system of management as unworthy of the House of Commons and degrading to the functions of the executive. He was prepared to meet the resolutions with a plain straightforward negative; but he would be no party in supporting an amendment the object of which was merely to gain time, and to enable the government to keep the cards in their hands for another year, so as to shuffle them as they pleased. Mr. Gathorne Hardy made a most eloquent defence—perhaps the most brilliant speech on this occasion from the Conservative benches in the Lower House—in favour of the maintenance of the Irish Church, and delivered several pointed thrusts as to the suddenness of Mr. Gladstone's conversion upon the subject. Mr. Lowe inveighed against the Church in Ireland as if it had been a communion composed entirely of venal and inebriated working men. "You may call it sacred," he cried, "you may unite it by Acts of Parliament to the English Church, you may, like Mezentius, link the dead with the living. His object was to kill; for he knew that coupling with a dead body would be death to the living. Your object is to save, and yet you adopt the same process. You see the living Church of England, the dying Church of Ireland. Why are you so anxious to unite them, seeing how much they are different? You put machinery in motion which may destroy the Irish Church, and which may involve the English Church also. Rely on it, all your efforts are in vain. You may do your utmost; but you will not save the Irish Church, nor will the country give you the power of having the pleasure of destroying her. You will not be able to play over again your game of last year. The net of the fowler will not again ensnare the birds. The Irish Church is founded on injustice, on the dominant

rights of the few over the many, and it shall not stand. You call it a missionary church: if so, its mission is unfulfilled. It has utterly failed. It is like some exotic brought from a far country, tended with infinite pains and useless trouble. It is kept alive with the greatest difficulty and at great expense, in an ungenial climate and an ungrateful soil. The curse of barrenness is upon it. It has no leaves, puts forth no blossom, and yields no fruit. Cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?" Mr. Lowe was also very personal in his comments upon the career and character of the prime minister. On the last night of the debate Mr. Disraeli addressed the House (April 3, 1868).

"Sir," he said, "the right hon. gentleman the member for South Lancashire has moved that we should go into committee of the whole House upon the subject of the Irish Church, in order that he may propose resolutions which he has placed upon the table. We have not at present to discuss those resolutions, which would lead us into matters of great detail, of constitutional interest, and of legal difficulty, which might divert us from the general topic which now engages our attention. I apprehend that so far as the right hon. gentleman is concerned, there is no mistake as to his general meaning; for, although he has not yet had an opportunity of moving his resolutions, he has expressed the outline of the policy which he proposes that this House and the country should adopt. I apprehend that I am not in any way misrepresenting his meaning, or misinterpreting his expressions, a thing most foreign from my intention, when I say that the right hon. gentleman proposes to terminate the connection between the state and the church, so far as Ireland is concerned, which in neological phrase is styled disestablishment; and that he proposes a policy, which first partially, and in the end completely, would accomplish the disendowment of the Church of Ireland. I believe I have correctly expressed what the right hon.

gentleman has stated, or rather intimated, and what if opportunity offered he would in more detail bring under our consideration.

"Well, sir, this question having been brought before the House and the country somewhat suddenly, as all will admit, the government had to consider what was the proper mode in which to encounter it. They might have moved the 'previous question' to the motion for going into committee. That is a course which upon the same subject was, I believe, adopted by our predecessors three years ago; and it is a course which is much approved by those who have experience of parliamentary life when they deal with difficult questions. It might have been prudent three years ago to meet this motion by moving the previous question. But I think myself, considering the circumstances under which this question is now brought forward, not by an isolated and independent member of parliament, but by a party of considerable power, by the leader of the Opposition of this House, and under circumstances, as it appears to us, of precipitation, and consequently being a question which attracts and even alarms the public and the House—it would have been unwise of us to have taken refuge in a course at all times ambiguous and not altogether satisfactory.

"Well, sir, a motion to consider the condition of the Irish Church, or strictly speaking, to go into committee for that purpose, we might have met with a direct negative; but what would have been the inevitable inference which would have been drawn from such a course on our part? It would have been said we were of opinion that no change, no improvement, no modification was necessary, expedient, or desirable in the condition of the Church in Ireland. That was not the conclusion we wished to express. That was not our opinion; and I will meet in due course the demand of the right hon. gentleman who has just sat down [Mr. Cardwell] on this subject that, so far as we are concerned, there shall be a clear and intelligible issue. But if it were our

opinion that the condition of the Church in Ireland was susceptible of beneficial changes, how could we, without exposing ourselves to the grossest misrepresentation of our views, have met the motion with a direct negative? Who can doubt what would have been the inference drawn? In their speeches hon. gentlemen would have asked, 'Is the old reign of bigotry never to cease? Are you resolved to oppose all improvements? Are you prepared to deny that there are any anomalies to be corrected in arrangements which were settled, hastily settled, at a period of great political excitement forty years ago? Are you doggedly determined to say that there is no possible room for improvement in the condition of the Irish Church?' We know that would have been the general tenor of the speeches of hon. gentlemen opposite; and, sir, not only towards those reproaches, but because we are of opinion that considerable modifications may be made in the temporalities of that church highly to the advantage of the church itself, we could not take the course of meeting a motion of this kind with a direct negative. What was the third means open to us? To move an amendment. An amendment has been moved by my noble friend the foreign secretary, which has been the object of much criticism, as has been every amendment moved since I have sat in this House; but I am prepared to maintain that this amendment is drawn in strict accordance with parliamentary experience and precedent. We took that course, acting on the example of the most eminent men that ever controlled the affairs of the House of Commons, and we took it believing that it was the one most advantageous to the public interests.

"Now, sir, when Sir Robert Peel was the leader of the Opposition—of that long opposition, the opposition of seven years—during the seven years' war, when the circumstances of the House were not very different from those which now prevail, when there was, as there has now been for many years in this House, a balanced state

of parties, and when every year there was not one but more than one struggle for power between the great parties—on one occasion when, as on the present occasion, a motion was to be met by an amendment, the invariable advice of Sir Robert Peel was this :—‘ If you are obliged to have an amendment, never attempt to express your policy in an amendment. If you attempt to express it fully, you will produce a long and cumbrous document, which will open an immense number of issues, and which must bring about very protracted discussions. If, on the other hand, you adopt concinnity of expression and condensation, you will be accused of ambiguity and equivocation. The province of a party is to express and vindicate its policy in debate. Your amendment should never be inconsistent with your policy, but you must fix on some practical point which, if carried, would defeat the motion of your opponent.’

“ Now, sir, I think that very sound advice, and it has been invariably followed, not only by Sir Robert Peel’s friends, but by his distinguished opponents. If you look to all the amendments drawn up upon all great occasions by Sir Robert Peel’s party and by Lord Russell’s party, you will find that the adoption of that advice has been the invariable rule. Well, with this view, in drawing the amendment Her Majesty’s ministers fixed on two points—which they thought essentially practical—which, if the House accepted them, would defeat the motion of the right hon. gentleman, and which are perfectly consistent with the policy I am prepared to explain, expound, and uphold. These two points have already been mentioned to the House in the observations which I took the liberty of making when the hon. member for Cork [Mr. Maguire] brought forward his motion on the state of Ireland. I mentioned then that in our opinion, so far as the Church in Ireland was concerned, it was most expedient that we should await the report of the royal commission which has been recently appointed, and which has been

extremely industrious, as we have reason to believe, in its labours. That report we believed would be in our possession, I will not say in an early part of the session, but in the spring of this year.”

That was one position he took up, Mr. Disraeli continued. There was another. He denied the moral competence of that House of Commons to enter on a discussion of the question with a view to its settlement. He did not resist the motion on the ground that that parliament was a moribund parliament. Nothing of the kind. Although that might be the last session of the present parliament, and although when an election took place for a future parliament the appeal might be made to a larger constituency, he did not for a moment bring forward those circumstances as the basis of the argument that that House was not morally competent to deal with the question. He rested it precisely on another reason: he said that when a fundamental law of the country was called into question, though technically and legally the House had a right to do anything within the sphere of the House of Commons, *it was not morally competent to decide such a question if those who had elected it had not, in the constitutional course of public life, received some intimation that such a question was to come before it.*

“ Well, now, I ask,” he proceeded, “ had the country the slightest intimation during the last few years—previous to or during the period of the political existence of this House has it had the slightest intimation—that this important, this all-important question, not only from its specific nature but also from the ulterior consequences which it may induce, would be brought under discussion in parliament? I appeal to the programme of the prime minister of the time, which recommended a dissolution of parliament and explained his policy to the country. There is not the slightest allusion to the state of the Irish Church in that programme. We know very well from the correspondence which has taken place

between a prelate of the Irish Church, himself a man of eminent abilities and accomplishments, and the right hon. gentleman—although the letter appeared to take the right hon. gentleman by surprise the other night—we know that the right hon. gentleman at the time of the dissolution had not the remotest idea that the Irish Church would become the great subject of discussion.\* Sir, it is impossible to suppose that the right hon. gentleman is not sincere in anything which he writes at the moment he writes it, and I have not the slightest doubt that that was as honest a letter as even the right hon. gentleman ever wrote. I do not throw the slightest suspicion on that letter. But after all, what was the character of it? Is it not a record of the fact that only three years ago the right hon. gentleman treated the question of the Church in Ireland as one which was totally without the pale of modern politics—that he thought it could never be revived or restored, and that, if it were, he saw immense difficulties arising from the Articles of Union? But if it were revived or restored, and if these difficulties were mooted, his imagination could not conceive the possibility that in such a subject he should be mixed up. Well, that is evidence of what our leading men—men who guided the opinion not of their party only but of the country—thought of this great question. If that is not complete evidence of the view taken by Lord Palmerston and one of his chief ministers in this House with regard to the question of

the Church in Ireland and its political position, I say that no evidence can satisfy any person. Notwithstanding all this, the question is suddenly brought before us.

"Now, sir, I take no exaggerated view of even the Articles of Union. I have not for a moment pretended that the Articles of Union between the two nations are irreversible. I have not for a moment pretended that the Articles of Union, and the great Acts of parliament which were passed to carry them into effect, cannot by the consent of the sovereign and of the estates of the realm be changed or modified. And this I will venture to say, that they are, as I think all must acknowledge, among the most solemn muniments of the nation, and I do say that it is preposterous that we should be asked to reverse such solemn muniments at eight days' notice. In the course of this debate I have heard hon. gentlemen, referring to the Articles of Union and these Acts of parliament, make remarks which seemed to me to strike at the root of all social security and political stability. We have been told that these Articles were negotiated between a Protestant parliament in Dublin and a Protestant parliament in London.

"Sir, you cannot trifle with the history of our country in that way. What was the Bill of Rights? Are you prepared to give up the Bill of Rights because it was passed by a parliament of boroughmongers? If you adopt the principle of analyzing so finely the constituent elements of the public bodies that have negotiated and agreed to the great documents which are the charters of the people's rights, you may invalidate our prime liberties and level a blow against the security of property and order, which has hitherto been the pride and the boast of this country. Taking these two points, we endeavoured to comprise them in the amendment. We expressed in the amendment the opinion that until we had the report of the royal commission it would be inexpedient for the House to enter into the consideration of the Church

\* At the time of the Oxford University election of 1865 Mr. Gladstone thus wrote to an eminent dignitary of the church, who had made his vote conditional upon being satisfied as to Mr. Gladstone's views upon the future of the Irish Church:—"The question of the Irish Establishment," replied Mr. Gladstone, "*is remote and apparently out of all bearing upon the practical politics of the day.*" And again, "I think I have marked strongly my sense of the responsibility attaching to the opening of such a question. One thing I may add, because I think it a clear landmark. In any measure dealing with the Irish Church (*though I scarcely expect ever to be called on to share in such a measure*), the Act of Union must be recognized and must have important consequences, especially with reference to the position of the hierarchy." It was Mr. Gathorne Hardy who referred to this letter, much to the annoyance of Mr. Gladstone.

in Ireland; and at the same time we expressed our opinion that the decision upon these great points should be reserved for the new parliament. And then we are told that because we used the word "reserve"—a strictly parliamentary word—we invited the next parliament to enter into a discussion of this question. Now you may depend upon it that the next parliament will not much care for our invitation. If we think we are going to hoodwink or lead the next parliament, or to deprive it of its fair privileges or prerogatives, we shall commit one of the greatest blunders ever committed by man. Why, sir, in the free and frank expression of parliamentary language, it is perfectly open to me or to any one else to contest the moral competence of this House to do a particular act; but surely hon. gentlemen would hardly have such language used in a formal resolution. Therefore in that amendment we did not state that the House was not competent to enter into the discussion of this matter; but instead of using such explicit language we put it in a quieter and softer phrase, and said that the discussion ought to be reserved for a future parliament."

Mr. Disraeli then touched upon the hostility towards himself of one who had recently been his colleague. It is seldom either wise or generous to allude to feuds which have arisen from mistaken motives, and which have subsequently ended in the most amicable and confidential of reconciliations; but since the differences then existing between Lord Cranbourne and Mr. Disraeli were matters of notoriety and public comment, they cannot be entirely passed over here. We have nothing to show that, on the part of Mr. Disraeli, there was at this time any strong feeling of animosity towards his late colleague. Occasionally Mr. Disraeli allowed himself to comment upon the charges brought against him by his assailant, but, considering the provocation he had received, never in tones of the bitterness that might have been expected from

one who was a master of satire, and who openly held that invective was an ornament of debate. Towards Mr. Disraeli, however, Lord Cranbourne was as severe as he was unjust. He thoroughly misunderstood the policy of the prime minister, and consequently often arrived at the most unflattering of conclusions. He looked upon Mr. Disraeli as a clever adventurer who, to suit his own ambitious ends, had sacrificed his party and his convictions to obtain and hold office. He looked upon him as a leader who had "educated" his followers until he had succeeded in compelling them to abandon every distinct principle they had formerly maintained. He considered that Mr. Disraeli, though calling himself a Conservative, had handed the constitution over to the masses, and had swamped an intellectual minority by admitting an ignoble and ignorant majority to the suffrage. Such conduct was treachery of the basest description, and deserved to be openly exposed. And it must be confessed that Lord Cranbourne was no lenient critic. Both in parliament and in the periodical literature with which he was connected, the late secretary for India held up, with a bitter tongue and equally bitter pen, Mr. Disraeli to scorn. It is an episode in political history we have no wish to dwell upon. The most brilliant men have had to admit that they have at times misinterpreted a policy and misjudged a character; and there have been few statesmen who, throughout a long political life, have not had occasion to regret expressions which had been better left unsaid, and criticisms which had been better left unwritten. The once member for Stamford has been no exception to this rule. The cordial political intimacy which afterwards existed between the pungent critic and the object of his wrath is the best answer to the hasty and acrid comments passed upon Mr. Disraeli at this time by the then Lord Cranbourne, and the handsomest acknowledgment by their author that such animadversions had been totally undeserved.

Mr. Disraeli now alluded to the comments of Lord Cranbourne upon the amendment moved by Lord Stanley. "Perhaps I ought to notice," he said, "the remarks which were made by the noble lord the member for Stamford. The noble lord saw in this amendment, of which I have given the House the plain history—I say the plain and true history—the noble lord saw in the language of the amendment great cause for mistrust and want of confidence. He saw immediately that we were about to betray the trust with which he deems us to be invested. The noble lord is at no time wanting in imputing to us the being influenced by not the most amiable motives which can regulate the conduct of public men. I do not quarrel with the invective of the noble lord. The noble lord is a man of great talent, and he has vigour in his language. There is great vigour in his invective, and no want of vindictiveness. I admit that, now speaking as a critic, and perhaps not as an impartial one, I must say I think it wants finish. Considering that the noble lord has studied the subject, and that he has written anonymous articles against me before and since I was his colleague—I do not know whether he wrote them when I was his colleague—I think it might have been accomplished more *ad unguem*. There is one thing which the noble lord never pardons, and that is the passing of the Reform Act of last year. But I put it to the House what would have been the general state of affairs if the counsels of the noble lord upon that subject had prevailed, instead of the suggestions which I made and which the House adopted? Now that we are free from the heat and the great difficulties and perplexities of the last session, and can take, I hope, a fair view of what occurred, I would express my opinion—and I think it is not peculiar to myself—that we passed last year a most beneficent and noble Act. I have not the slightest apprehension—and I do not speak of my personal connection with the matter, but as the first minister of the

crown—I look with no apprehension whatever to the appeal that will be made to the people under the provisions of the Act. I believe you will have a parliament returned to this House full of patriotic and national sentiment, whose decision will add spirit to the community and strength to the state.

"Sir, the only objection which I have to these attacks of the noble lord is that they invariably produce an echo from the other side. That, it seems to me, is now almost a parliamentary law. When the bark is heard on this side, the right hon. member for Calne [Mr. Lowe] emerges, I will not say from his cave, but perhaps from a more cynical habitation. He joins immediately in the chorus of reciprocal malignity, and

" 'Hails with horrid melody the moon.'

"The right hon. gentleman has been extremely analytical upon the amendment of my noble friend—the amendment, that is, of the government, moved by my noble friend; and his 'zigzag' commentary, founded on the assumption of circumstances that never occurred, and motives that never influenced us, was amusing at the moment.\* But how far does that commentary agree with the real statement I have given of the cause and origin of this amendment?

"The right hon. gentleman was extremely exuberant in his comments upon my character and career. I will not trouble the House with a defence of that character and career. I have sat in this House more than thirty years, and can truly say that during that time comments upon my character and career have been tolerably free. But the House has been the jury of my life, and it allows me now here to address it; and therefore here is not the place in which I think it necessary to vindicate myself. The

\* Mr. Lowe complained that the government had by a kind of "zigzag policy" contrived to make the question of the Irish Church excessively complicated. He sneered at Mr. Disraeli's letter to Lord Dartmouth, and declared that the Protestant party would not be "gulled" by it. He also said that Mr. Disraeli had reached "his culminating point of audacity." Indeed, the whole speech was in the excellent taste to be expected from one who had acquired his parliamentary eloquence in the legislature of an ex-convict settler.

hon. gentleman the member for Calne is a very remarkable man. He is a learned man, though he despises history. He can chop logic like Dean Aldrich; but what is more remarkable than his learning and his logic is that power of spontaneous aversion which particularizes him. There is nothing that he likes, and almost everything that he hates. He hates the working classes of England. He hates the Roman Catholics of Ireland. He hates the Protestants of Ireland. He hates Her Majesty's ministers. And until the right hon. gentleman the member for South Lancashire placed his hand upon the ark, he seemed almost to hate the right hon. gentleman the member for South Lancashire. But now all is changed. Now we have the hour and the man. But I believe the clock goes wrong, and the man is mistaken.

"Let me now ask the attention of the House to the proposition before us. If I have for a moment trespassed upon their attention they will allow me to say that it has been in fair self-defence. I have never attacked any one in my life (*cries of "Oh!" and "Peel!"*) unless I was first assailed. Now, sir, no one can deny this, that the propositions of the right hon. gentleman are very considerable. They are vast and violent. All admit that. (*cries of "No!"*). Well, hon. gentlemen say "No;" but to disestablish an institution that has existed 300 years, that is in the possession of property, that is certainly supported by the sympathies of a great part of the population of the country—to propose to subvert such an institution, without now going into the merits of the case, is surely a vast and violent change.

"Well, then, the first question I will ask is, 'Why this change?' and upon that point we have had no satisfactory answer. We are told that there is a crisis in Ireland, and the hon. member for Birmingham the other night, with, I must say, one of those characteristics which he invariably displays, but in an agreeable manner, that of misrepresentation, said that I denied that there

was anything critical in the state of Ireland, and that Ireland was, so far as my opinions were concerned, in a perfectly satisfactory state.\* Why, sir, I never said that Ireland was in a satisfactory state. In a great debate like this the House will, I am sure, be indulgent to me if I touch upon some of these topics. I denied that there was an Irish crisis according to the interpretation of the member for South Lancashire. The member for South Lancashire, when the late parliament was dissolved not four years ago, was of opinion that the Irish Church was a question totally out of the pale of modern politics. He seemed to shrink from the profanation of the idea that he or any human being could ever disturb it. And yet he is the man who comes forward to abolish that institution. Well, I must look to the grounds upon which he founds such a violent proceeding. He said there was a crisis in Ireland, and as I thought at the time with dangerous candour he analyzed that crisis and gave its causes and its elements. And what were they? Fenianism was one. Fenianism when he was a minister was rampant and mysterious, and the more dangerous because it was mysterious. Fenianism now is not rampant; we think we have gauged its lowest depths, and we are not afraid of it. That is one of the evidences and elements of this crisis. Does it not seem rather strange that though Fenianism was so critical when he was a minister we heard nothing of the crisis, but when I am minister and Fenianism is so subdued it is made the principal argument for a revolution?

"Well, what was the second element of the right hon. gentleman? He said there was a startling and dangerous emigration from the country. I never liked the emigration from Ireland. I have deplored it. I know that the finest elements of political

\* "We had a declaration from the right hon. gentleman at the head of the government that there was no crisis at all—that, in point of fact, the condition of Ireland was a normal condition, and that there was no necessity for anything remarkable or unusual in the legislation that was required."—*Mr. Bright, March 81, 1868.*



power are men, and therefore I have not sympathized with the political economists who would substitute entirely for men animals of a lower organization. I never heard an opinion of that kind from the right hon. gentleman. I have always understood that the right hon. gentleman and his friends looked on 'the depletion' of Ireland not without satisfaction. But this I know, that the emigration from Ireland has lasted now for a considerable number of years, during most of which the right hon. gentleman was a leading minister of the crown, and yet he never said that in consequence of that emigration the state of Ireland was critical. And I know that now when I have the honour to be a minister of the crown, and view still with anxiety the emigration from that country, though I have the satisfaction of seeing that it is reduced, the right hon. gentleman says this also is an element in the crisis of Ireland. Well, then, how am I to understand that the second element of the crisis is one which can really be advanced as an argument in favour of a great revolution?

"Then, sir, another element of the right hon. gentleman was education. The people of Ireland were so educated that you must destroy the Irish Church. Well, the people of Ireland have been educated a great number of years, thank God; and I wish the people of England had been educated as well. I am not aware that the education of the Irish people during the two short years that we have sat upon this bench has created the Irish crisis. The education of the Irish people has been very advantageous to them; and I am not aware that I have been one of the members of this House who have done anything to restrict that education. As for the fourth cause of the crisis, I should have thought that, having passed a reform bill last year, that was a reason why we should have lost no time in passing a reform bill for Ireland. Instead of doing that we are to acknowledge a crisis. I say, under these circumstances, I was certainly justified in utterly

repudiating the principle upon which the whole policy of the right hon. gentleman is founded—namely, that there is a crisis in Ireland; but the hon. member for Birmingham is not justified in saying, from my adoption of that argument, that I assert that the state of Ireland is perfectly satisfactory, that nothing need be done, and that the whole agitation is a delusion.

"As I cannot admit that there is a crisis in Ireland according to the views of the right hon. gentleman the member for South Lancashire, I will state my view of the condition of Ireland. I do not think there is an Irish crisis, but if there be one it is not occasioned by any of the causes mentioned by the right hon. gentleman. But I say, and I have said it very often, that the condition of Ireland is, on the whole, not entirely satisfactory. The general proposition the right hon. gentleman has placed before us is the foundation of what I look upon as a great change, and I may say a revolution in our policy; and the circumstances on which he based it ranged over 700 years. The premises from which the right hon. gentleman drew his deductions were 700 years. Well, how can we, when a great statesman comes forward all of a sudden, like a thief in the night, and recommends a course so vast and violent that as yet we have got, as it were, only into the ante-chamber of the great discussion it will involve—I say when the right hon. gentleman brings forward such vast premises, and draws his conclusions from them, what can we do, in the first instance, at least, but take general views? If a man tells me that my country is in a critical state in consequence of the misgovernment of 700 years, as a sensible and prudent man I must take general views; but I take general views within a very limited range. I compare the state of Ireland and its people, not when they were under the tender mercies of ancient historical characters, but I take a limited practical view. Is the condition of the Irish people now worse than it was before the Union? So far as

my researches guide me you find the people of Ireland are in a much better position. They are in the enjoyment of social and political rights they did not then possess; they are better fed, better clothed, and better paid than they were. So much for the working population. The middle class are more wealthy and more enterprising; and the landlords, upon whom such attacks are made, have an advantage which English landlords do not always have—they get their rents paid.\* Is the condition of Ireland worse at this moment, when we are called upon precipitately to take this serious step, than it was during the revolutionary war? Were the people then better clothed and better fed? were their wages higher or as high? You know they were not. Take the time when the tithe-proctors were fighting the people. Was the condition of Ireland then to be at all compared with its condition now? Is it not an absolute fact that all classes of the population in Ireland at this moment are more prosperous, are wealthier, are in the enjoyment of political and social rights which their ancestors and predecessors did not enjoy fifty years ago? Is it not true that the working population are at this moment in the enjoyment of a higher rate of wages, and consequently in a higher state of social enjoyment, than at any previous period of their history?

"Well, sir, that has been urged—it has never been answered. The chief secretary of the lord-lieutenant, in a statement full of the most accurate information and weighty argument, placed that before the House, and not a single gentleman opposite for a moment impugned the accuracy of his facts or the soundness of his conclusions. Well, how are we met? A statesman who, in this position of affairs, makes the enormous sacrifice of all the convictions of his life, tells us that the state of Ireland is so critical that he must do that which only three

years ago, when mentioned, struck him with such inexpressible horror, he said the question was without the pale of political debate. I want to know on what ground he does this. The candid ingenuity of several gentlemen opposite gives us the ground—the evils of Ireland. We have proved that the country is richer, the people are more prosperous, the landlords have their rents, the middle-class are perpetually engaging in speculation and shares, and the working population have doubled their wages. Since that has been proved and acknowledged even by hon. gentlemen opposite, because it could no longer be denied, the whole thing—this wide-spread discontent, this constant disaffection, and the perilous position of the Church in Ireland—is explained by the fact, the recent discovery, that though the evils of Ireland are not materially increased there are moral evils, there are sentimental evils to be redressed. We are called upon now to argue the question—not as in recent times when we had to discuss the political and material condition of Ireland, but we are asked to take a vast and violent step because the people of Ireland are suffering under a moral, or, as it has been styled, a sentimental grievance.

"Well, sir, I am not the man to despise a sentimental grievance. I think he takes a very contracted view of life and of human nature who despises the sentimental grievances of a nation; but when we have to deal with sentimental grievances, and when in consequence of sentimental grievances we are asked to make very material changes, I think every candid mind will agree that we ought to proceed with caution. Though we may be ready to make very great sacrifices to soothe the pride and gratify the feeling of race, still to take some precipitate step and fail in accomplishing our desire would be disastrous to the state and humiliating to the statesman. Now, what are those sentimental grievances of the Irish people? I am not conscious that I have ever been deficient in sympathy for the Irish people. They have engaging qualities

\* Thanks to the abolition of the Irish Church and the other predatory measures of a Liberal Irish policy, the same cannot now be said.

which I think every man who has any heart will respect. But I must say nothing surprises me more than the general conduct of the Irish people on this subject of sentimental grievances. They are a race who are certainly among the bravest of the brave, most ingenious, witty, very imaginative, and therefore very sanguine; but for them to go about the world announcing that they are a conquered race, does appear to me the most extraordinary thing in the world. All of us, nations and individuals, are said to have a skeleton in the House. I do not say that I have not one. I hope I have not—if I had I would turn the key upon him. But for the Irish ostentatiously to declare that they are a conquered race is very strange. If they really were a conquered race, they are not the people who ought to announce it. It is the conquerors from whom we should learn the fact, for it is not the conquered who should go about the world and announce their shame and humiliation.

“But I entirely deny that the Irish are a conquered race. I deny that they are more of a conquered race than the people of any other nation. Therefore, I cannot see that there is any real ground for the doleful tone in which they complain that they are the most disgraced of men, and make that the foundation for the most unreasonable requests. Ireland is not one whit more conquered than England. They are always telling us that the Normans conquered Ireland. Well, I have heard that the Normans conquered England too, and the only difference between the two conquests is that while the conquest of Ireland was only partial, that of England was complete. Then they tell us that was a long time ago, but since then there was a dreadful conquest by Cromwell, when Cromwell not only conquered the people, but confiscated their estates. But Cromwell conquered England. He conquered the House of Commons. He ordered that bauble to be taken away, in consequence of which an hon. member, I believe of very advanced

Liberal opinions, the other night proposed that we should raise a statue to his memory. But Cromwell not only conquered us, but he forfeited and sequestered estates in every county in England. Well, sir, then we are told that the Dutch conquered Ireland, but unfortunately they conquered England too. They marched from Devonshire to London through the midst of a grumbling population. But the Irish fought like gentlemen for their sovereign, and there is no disgrace in the battle of the Boyne, nor does any shame attach to the sword of Sarsfield. I wish I could say as much for the conduct of the English leaders at that time. Therefore the habit of the Irish coming forward on all occasions to say that they are a conquered race, and in consequence of their being a conquered race they must destroy the English institutions, is a most monstrous thing.

“Then we are told that the Church in Ireland is a badge of this conquest. Well, sir, I will not go into the question as to the origin of the Irish Church. I hope that nothing shall induce me to enter into a controversy as to whether St. Patrick was a Protestant or not. But I ask this plain question from this conquered race—who attain an eminent position in every country where wars are successful—why is the Church of Ireland more a badge of conquest to the Roman Catholics of that country than the Church of England is to the Dissenters? There is this difference, that according to their own story countless generations almost have elapsed since the Roman Catholics were in possession of these churches in Ireland, while in England there was a great change within comparatively modern times, the fact being that one meets almost every day in England the descendants of some one or other of the ejected ministers; but we never meet a burly nonconformist who tells us that he is a member of a conquered race, and that he regards the Church of England as a badge of conquest. The Dissenter disapproves of the church, and he hopes some day to terminate its existence

as an establishment, but he considers himself to be on perfectly equal terms. As far as their relation to the church establishment is concerned, what difference is there between the Roman Catholics of Ireland and the Nonconformists of this country, who are among the most wealthy, influential, and intelligent of Her Majesty's subjects, scores of whom, moreover, occupy seats in this House at the present moment? If there is any difference, the feelings of the English Dissenter ought to be more bitter than those of the Roman Catholic. That is, therefore, another point, so far as sentimental grievances are concerned, of which I really do hope we shall hear no more.

"Now, sir, I come to a more practical part of the question. (*Ironical cheering.*) I understand that cheer, but we shall never come to a solution of any of those questions unless we first arrive at clear ideas of what we mean. You wish to convey in that cheer that I have been speaking on subjects not germane to the question in hand. My answer is that it is impossible for any one to grapple with the real points before us, unless we clear the atmosphere of these nebulous illusions. Unless we get rid of 'conquered races,' of 'badges of conquest,' and things of that kind, we cannot realize what it is we have to do. We must be very cautious in respect to the great question now before the House and the country when we find it started by a man so eminent as the right hon. member for South Lancashire on premises so utterly and absurdly fallacious. I say that it is not right to disestablish the Irish Church; and of this I am quite certain, that it never can be right to argue that question on an assumed and fallacious crisis, which any man who has any knowledge of life knows has no existence. I have brought the discussion to this point, and I want now to ask the House to consider how we who sit on this bench have dealt with those grievances of Ireland on which I have touched. I say that during the period when I have had any lead in public life—now, I am

sorry to say, more than twenty years—I have acted conscientiously on one principle alone, and there has not been a gentleman on this bench, or on the opposite bench when we were in Opposition, but gave me on that point unswerving and complete sympathy and adhesion. In what I recommended to be done I had the sanction and support of all my colleagues now in the present cabinet, of all who sat in a responsible position on the bench opposite, and, I can say, even the sanction of the noble lord the member for Stamford."

Mr. Disraeli then sketched the history of the policy of the Tory party towards Ireland.

"What was the policy we pursued with respect to Ireland? Our policy was one of conciliation. Most of us entered public life when there had been the fiercest acrimony between Irish parties. Some hon. gentlemen now sitting in this House can hardly realize the sentiments then entertained towards one another by the Irish members of different religions, and English members of different parties who sympathized with their co-religionists. But about twenty-five years ago English statesmen had arrived at a conclusion, advantageous both for England and Ireland, that we should have a policy of conciliation, and that we should endeavour as far as we could to remove anomalies, soften asperities, and encourage between the two religions and races a more living and direct sympathy. The principles of our policy were—first, in Ireland to create and not destroy; and secondly, to acknowledge that you could not in any more effectual way strengthen the Protestant interest than by doing justice to the Roman Catholics. On those principles we acted. The right hon. and gallant gentleman the member for Huntingdon [General Peel], in a speech which he made last night, and which the House heard with that interest with which it always welcomes the observations of the right hon. gentleman, alluded with pride, and with justifiable pride, to what he had

done with regard to the appointment of Roman Catholic chaplains in the army. The right hon. gentleman, though he took that course spontaneously, did so entirely with the sympathy of his colleagues.

"The House will remember that much discussion occurred on a recent occasion respecting the appointment of Roman Catholic chaplains in gaols.\* That measure was not proposed by us, but the government of that day were in great stress concerning it, and we supported them, although they were opposed by many of their own party, and although many on this side of the House disapproved the course they took. We, however, were convinced that course was based on right principles, and it would not have been adopted but for our assistance, to which a speech of unrivalled power by the right hon. member for Oxfordshire [Mr. Henley] largely contributed. On a subsequent occasion we had before us the oath to be taken by the Roman Catholics. I have seldom considered a question which occasioned me more anxiety and pain, but it was brought to a satisfactory conclusion greatly by the influence of hon. gentlemen on these benches; and the oath which was ultimately adopted, with slight variations, by parliament was drawn by the present lord chancellor of England, who, I believe, was never suspected of being false to the principles of Protestantism. Through all these endeavours to carry out a principle of conciliation I have invariably been supported by my right hon. friend the secretary for the home department. In the same spirit we have brought forward a proposition to grant a charter to a Roman Catholic university. I need not comment upon the 'zigzag' criticisms of the right hon. member for Calne, but I understand our proposal has been commented upon during my absence this evening.

"Sir, I believe that proposal was perfectly consistent with the principle we have laid down, that in Ireland the wise policy is to

create and not to destroy, and to strengthen Protestant institutions by being just to the Roman Catholics. Sir, I believe the proposal to grant a charter to a Roman Catholic university was conceived entirely in that spirit. Hon. gentlemen opposite say—'Take hold of Trinity College; appropriate its property, destroy its constitution, tear its charters to shreds; that is the way to conciliate the people, that is the way to reconcile parties and creeds in Ireland.' But that is not the policy which I and my colleagues conceived. We have determined to create, and never to destroy, in Ireland. There has been too much destruction, I say; therefore we shall maintain all we have said in support of our proposition for a charter. I do not wish to conceal that it is one which I believe responds to the legitimate demands of the Roman Catholics. It will at the same time maintain that great University of Dublin, which is one of the greatest universities in the country.

"No one will question for one moment but that there is a want of educational means for the higher classes of the Roman Catholic population in Ireland, though people may differ as to the way by which it should be satisfied. I say it is wise to satisfy that want by a mode which creates, and does not destroy. That is in accordance with our uniform policy, and in conformity also with the policy which hon. gentlemen opposite have hitherto pursued with the same integrity of purpose and sincerity of feeling as we believe we are able to claim for ourselves. And why have hon. gentlemen opposite pursued this policy with us? Because the experience of the past has taught us that it was wise to do that which would of all things tend to effect a reconciliation between creeds and classes, and put an end to the unsatisfactory state of feeling in Ireland. We have been subjected to the usual taunts; nothing is so easy as to say that we do this thing to gain the Catholic vote, that we do another to obtain a majority or maintain a position. But whether in office or in Opposition, it has

\* See vol. i., p. 524.

been the same, and these taunts pass by us without the slightest effect upon our course. The same taunts, indeed, have been levelled at our opponents, but never by me.

"Well, let us look at this policy as applied to the Church in Ireland, which is the question before us. We have attempted to conciliate creeds. We have endeavoured to bring about a state of society by which every man in Ireland should feel that he was in a position of the same equality as he would enjoy in England. Whether the measures were proposed and passed by us or by our opponents, I do not think that policy has hitherto been unsuccessful. There has been a difference in the tone even of the members of this House as compared with what it was a quarter of a century ago. Out of this House there has been a very great change. But what is the policy of the right hon. gentleman? He comes forward to propose a change which will at once outrage the feelings and touch the dearest sentiments and interests of a large and very influential portion of the population of Ireland. Year after year we have in this House endeavoured to secure to the Roman Catholics, and especially to the Roman Catholics of Ireland, the full and free exercise of their religion. There is not a gentleman opposite, however he may vote, who does not in his heart know that is true. I am not referring to a session, I am not referring to a parliament, but I am referring to the long and patient and continuous policy which we have pursued even under the unfavourable circumstances and discouragements of opposition—the policy that the Roman Catholics should have a full and free exercise of their religion; and although it entailed upon us much prejudice and misapprehension among friends whom we respected and regarded, we were firm to that policy, because we believed it to be right and wise, and that it would lead to that general sympathy and conciliation to which I have adverted.

"But what does the right hon. gentleman propose? Have the Protestants of Ireland

no interest in their faith? Have they no regard for their church? Has their history not identified them with that institution? Have the Protestants of Ireland no sentimental feelings which are to be regarded? And what are we to think of the statesman who, having, as I suppose, sanctioned the policy which I have indicated, comes forward at this moment to introduce to us not merely a measure but a policy which must revive all the acrimony of which we had hoped to get rid—which must call into existence all those inveterate and rancorous feelings which we have sought to eradicate—which places all classes and creeds in an adverse position, and renders that country again the scene of every hostile passion, of every sentiment which is opposed to that political tranquillity which all great statesmen have striven to produce? . . .

"The policy recommended by the right hon. gentleman, the member for South Lancashire, involves issues in my mind much more important than the government of Ireland. And I would ask the House for a moment to consider what would be the effect of the proposal of the right hon. gentleman upon the property of the country. Now, I am not going to impress upon the House the importance of respecting a prescriptive title of 300 years. I recognize fully that there is a difference, so far as the state is concerned, between public and private property. But the various shades between them, although they are numerous, blend, and dangerously blend, and it is of much importance that when you deal even with public property you should deal with it in a manner so thoughtful, so learned, and so wise that you should not endanger the principle of private property. All that I pass aside, and I leave it to gentlemen on both sides well to weigh what may be the consequences of interfering with a prescriptive title of 300 years. What effect it may have on the estates of the great city companies I stop not to inquire. What effect the principle by which it is recommended in Ireland may have even upon the

estates of private individuals whose property has arisen from the plunder of the church I stop not to ask. I believe there are abbeys in Ireland, and there are many in England, that are no longer enjoyed by abbots. I do not dwell upon these things. I remind the House on the general consideration not to forget them. I view with great jealousy the plunder of a church, because, so far as history can guide me, I have never found that churches are plundered except to establish or enrich oligarchies; and although it may be a very liberal movement to attack an ecclesiastical institution, I have never found that the consequences were in favour of liberty or enlightened feeling.

"But what I want to impress upon the House is this, that there is a new view of the case with regard to the question of property in the course adopted by the right hon. gentleman. The principle of property is contested in the age in which we live. I am not alarmed by that, because I think the principle of property may be established on the strongest and soundest arguments that the human intellect can conceive. But we cannot shut our eyes to what the hon. member for Birmingham calls 'the spirit of the age,' and which entirely influences him in the advice which he gives to the right hon. gentleman the member for South Lancashire. In the present day the principle of property, even of private property, has been contested; and Ireland unfortunately is not an exception to the countries in which that political dogma has been promulgated. Observe what the proposition of the right hon. gentleman involves. I can understand a man, for example, taking up this position—'Three hundred years ago the churches of Ireland were ministered by priests of the Roman Catholic faith, and were filled by communicants of the Roman Catholic creed. You ejected our ministers 300 years ago, you expelled our congregations and drove them to a distant part of the island. Now our opportunity is come—the hour and the man have both arrived—

now we will regain what we have lost, and the Protestant populations and the Protestant ministers shall leave the churches.' That, undoubtedly, would be a violation of property; the prescription of the Protestant population, of three centuries' duration, would be violated; and to that degree the principle of property would be outraged. But then the principle of property would be vindicated in a much higher degree by the principle of restitution, and so it might be contended that there was no violation of property at all. These persons might say, 'We are only restoring property to the original owners, and we announce it as a principle so sacred that even 300 years of abuse shall not prevent us from acknowledging its sacredness.'

"But the right hon. gentleman does nothing of the kind. He goes to the Church of Ireland, he takes all its property, and he does not tell us what he is going to do with it. There is no restitution to palliate or excuse the proceeding; it is sheer confiscation. And therefore I say that the principle proposed for your sanction in this scheme, by which the right hon. gentleman can pounce upon all the property of the Church in Ireland and not tell you what he is going to do with it, is an outrage and a violation of the principle of property, than which nothing greater or more enormous can be conceived. In a parenthesis the right hon. gentleman told us that the property would be preserved and only used for Irish purposes."

What, asked Mr. Disraeli, were those Irish purposes? Reduction of the duties upon whisky would be an Irish purpose; was that what Mr. Gladstone meant? He hoped the House of Commons would not consent to move in the dark on such an important subject. The proposition of Mr. Gladstone involved an attack on the principle of property, which had never yet been—he would not say mooted in parliament, but which had scarcely found a place in the speculations of the most abstract philosophers. For,

although there had been propositions before to attack the property of national institutions, no proposition of that kind had ever been made by a minister of the crown, or one standing in the responsible position of leader of the Opposition. No one had ever yet attempted to attack the public property of the country, who had not at the same time indicated to the country with what intention he laid hands upon the property which he thus appropriated. Knowing what they all know, that the plunder of churches, which were the property of the people, had never yet produced anything for the people, Mr. Disraeli declared that they ought to look carefully at that proposition, which left them entirely in the dark. They ought to look with the greatest jealousy on such a proposition. He could not under any circumstances agree that it should be appropriated to what in Liberal language was called a secular purpose. *A secular purpose was always a job.* Church property was the property of the people set apart for a specific purpose—their spiritual instruction. There was a great lack of funds for spiritual instruction. The religious education of the people had been much neglected in England owing to the great plunder of the church, and the plunder of the church had invariably been the appropriation of public property to private individuals.

"There is another subject," he continued, "to which before I sit down I must call the serious consideration of the House. I feel that I have unfortunately somewhat trespassed upon their attention, but the House is generous, and it feels that this is an occasion on which it is scarcely an intrusion on my part to crave their indulgence. I have to place before them one of the greatest issues ever offered to their consideration, and that somewhat suddenly. The conflict has come upon us when we little expected it, and it is necessary that the House and the country should understand what they have to decide. The right hon. gentleman who preceded me [Mr. Cardwell] was

nervously alive upon that subject. He said, 'We must have a clear and intelligible issue before the country.' Well, so far as I am concerned, the issue shall be clear and intelligible. I have touched upon this question with regard to Ireland by itself, and I have shown how completely contrary to the policy which the wisest statesmen have pursued, even at great personal sacrifice, for a quarter of a century, is the policy suddenly recommended to us by the right hon. gentleman the member for South Lancashire. No more conciliation; no more hope of reconciling creeds and classes; no more hope by prudent arrangement of securing in a country of anomalies, no doubt, and full of historical difficulties, what I thought we were arriving at, by achieving that equality in the state which the subjects of the queen enjoy in England.

"All that is past. The great philosophers and physicians of the state are of opinion that such equality can only be accomplished by outraging the dearest feelings and invading the interests of a population not inconsiderable, very influential, and the most important portion of the Irish people. The policy of conciliation, sanctioned by Peel, supported with admirable eloquence by Graham, from which Palmerston did not recoil, to which Lord Russell gave his adhesion, and to which I once thought the right hon. gentleman opposite would have worked with me—it is gone. For Protestant ascendancy, which really no longer existed, is to be substituted, I suppose, Papal supremacy. *All that we have attempted for years to accomplish is to be obliterated, and Ireland is still to be the scene of faction, is still to be the difficulty of England. That is what you are bringing about at a moment when we seemed on the verge of accomplishing what for a quarter of a century we have been labouring for.*

"I have asked the House to consider the altered circumstances of the case, and I have begged the House to reflect for a moment on what might be the influence on property of the policy recommended by



the right hon. gentleman. I now come to another and more important ulterior consequence. If that policy is carried into effect, the connection between the state and the church in Ireland ceases; the government of Ireland is divorced from the principle of religion, which hitherto has been acknowledged as part of our national policy. Now, what is meant by the union between church and state? In this crisis, I say, it is of great importance that we should fully understand what we mean by a connection between church and state. I will give my version of it. *I understand by it that authority is to be not merely political; that government is to be not merely an affair of force, but is to recognize its responsibility to the Divine Power.*

"Sir, we have discarded the divine right of kings, and properly discarded it, because the divine right of kings led to the abuse of supernatural power by individuals; but an intelligent age will never discard the divine right of government. *If government is not divine, it is nothing.* It is a mere affair of the police-office, of the tax-gatherer, of the guard-room. Now, sir, any man who has had any experience of affairs knows this—that every year government becomes more difficult. It is its connection with the religious principle—it is not the guard-room, it is not the police-office, it is not the tax-gatherer—which enables it to rule the nation. You must educate—educate the people. You must reform the criminal, you must establish asylums to meet all the wants of injured and suffering society. These are the duties of government. In their performance the government is perpetually applied to, is perpetually called upon; and how are we to perform those offices unless we are in connection with religious bodies? *It is the principle of religion which makes a government sensible and conscious that it has to perform these duties; and having to perform these duties, it requires an agency by which it can accomplish them.*

"I am totally at a loss to see how we can

connect government with religion except by an establishment. One of the things which the right hon. gentleman who preceded me wanted was an intelligible issue. I give him a clear and intelligible issue. I want to know how we can connect the government with religion except by an establishment. It is very true that in a country like England, where we have the advantage of complete toleration, we may have an establishment which is not the church that represents the entire majority of the country: but we cannot judge of the influence of an established church by the mere influence of its ministers or by the number of those in communion with it. We must recollect the influence which the existence of such an establishment has on those who are not communicants with that church. The great sectarian parties of this country, so full of learning and spirit, so highly disciplined and organized—what would they have been without the Church of England, the archetype which produced the great competition of charity which is the characteristic of the age and the century in which we live?

"Well, if you admit this principle you ought to hesitate very much as to the course you are taking. What are you doing as regards Ireland? Are you prepared to say that the government in Ireland shall be a government disconnected from the principle of religion? Are you prepared to say that? If you are not prepared to say that, how is government in Ireland to be connected with the principle of religion? Tell me that. Will you endow the Presbyterian Church in Ireland? Why, all the objections which you allege against the Anglican Church will equally apply to the Presbyterian Church. Its population is not more considerable. Well, will you connect with the state the Roman Church? (*Cries of "No!"*) You say 'No!' We know there are some persons who say 'Yes!' But you are right in saying 'No!' There is no doubt it is utterly impracticable. The United Kingdom is a Protestant kingdom. The people of the United Kingdom are a

Protestant people. They defend and cherish a Protestant throne, and any attempt in Ireland to establish a Roman Church in connection with the state is a dream which no practical man would allow himself to indulge in.

"Well, if you cannot establish the Kirk, if you cannot establish the Church of Rome, then if you are going to destroy the Protestant Episcopal Church, you come to this point—you will have a government in Ireland that is not connected with the religious principle. This appears to me to be a logical consequence; and at this moment, if you believe with me that the union between church and state is a great security for civilization and for religious liberty—I say, if you agree with me in this—you must acknowledge that there is no possible means by which you can maintain that union but by maintaining the Church in Ireland. Reform or modify her if you will, make her more efficient if you can; but unless you are prepared to give up the connection between church and state, which is the connection of authority tempered by the civilizing power of religion, you must maintain the church. You cannot stir from the position; you must accept one of these two alternatives."

Mr. Disraeli then touched upon his letter to Lord Dartmouth. Some hostile criticism had been passed upon it. Mr. Goschen had asserted that the prime minister had written "a letter to the clergy telling them that the church was in danger; they have all preached in consequence, and this has produced a considerable effect." Mr. Coleridge had spoken to the same purport. Mr. Lowe, who "misdated the letter, misquoted the letter, and misconceived the letter," had declared that Mr. Disraeli had penned the epistle with the object of exciting the Protestant feelings of the country. In refutation of these comments, the prime minister remarked that his letter had not been written to a clergyman but to a layman, and that there was nothing about Protestant feeling in it. "I did not say," cried Mr. Disraeli, "that the church was in

danger. I said the state was in danger. Terminate the connection between the state and the church; divorce authority from the religious principle; you will find the state in danger, not the church, when it thus loses the high sanction and the high influences which animate a nation. I ask again, is it or is it not true that if the policy of the right hon. gentleman is adopted you terminate the connection in Ireland between government and the church? Is it or is it not true? Let us have a clear answer to that. (*Opposition cheers.*) You admit it. Can you resist the consequences of your admission? (*Cries of "Hear, hear!" from the Opposition.*) Your 'Hear, hear!' will some day be remembered by yourselves with astonishment, and perhaps remorse. There is more in that 'Hear, hear!' than you or than England conceives. You will terminate the connection between church and state in Ireland; why should you stop there? If the 'hear-hearers' are to have their way I can completely understand the policy that is brought before us. But what I want is that the House of Commons and England should understand what is the clear and intelligible issue the right hon. gentleman the member for Oxford is so anxious to ascertain. Well, if you adopt the principle of separation between church and state in Ireland, there is no reason why you should not adopt it in Scotland. The Church of Scotland has in its communion only a minority of the people, and I want to know upon what principle you can maintain the Kirk in Scotland if you do not maintain the Church in Ireland. Well, then, it is admitted that the majority not being within the pale of the Scottish Kirk, Scotland may also follow the policy of the right hon. member for Lancashire. Why stop at Scotland? Are you prepared for the ulterior consequences of this policy? That is what I want to have thoroughly understood by the people of this country. Let there be, as the hon. member for Oxford says, 'a clear and intelligible issue.' Well, the church falls in Ireland, it falls in Scot-

land, but it is never to fall in England, because the right hon. gentleman says there are millions upon millions of churchmen in England. That is rhetoric, it is not reason. Why, the hon. member for Birmingham, that great master of the mind of the right hon. member for South Lancashire—we have heard of educating; why, he too can educate—that hon. gentleman will take the census returns, and with that analysis which his shrewd intellect is so well able to regulate and control, he will prove that it is a very clear conclusion, from the statistical documents in his hand, that the union between church and state—that union between authority and religion which has humanized authority, civilized this country, and secured to us civil and religious liberty—cannot be maintained.”

Mr. Disraeli then proved, from a certain letter which he held in his hand, that the Welsh were beginning to cry out that they too had a church question to deal with, as well as the Irish. On what principle, he asked, could the House refuse to apply to Scotland and Wales what was about to be applied to Ireland? They were about to attempt to introduce a most dangerous precedent. “I know very well,” he said in conclusion, “the difficulties we have to contend with now. I know very well what are the powers that are now, and have been for some time, meeting together and joining to produce the consequences which some anticipate, and which I hope may yet be defeated. No man can have watched what has taken place in this country during the last ten years without being prepared, if he be of a thoughtful mind, for the crisis of this country. I repeat the expression that I used in my letter to Lord Dartmouth, that the crisis of England is now fast arriving. High-Church Ritualists and the Irish followers of the Pope have been long in secret combination, and are now in open confederacy. It is a fact. It is confessed by those who attempted to prevent this combination, to mitigate the occurrence, to avoid the conjuncture which we always felt

would be most dangerous to the country. They have combined to destroy that great blessing of conciliation which both parties in the state for the last quarter of a century have laboured to effect. I am perfectly aware of the great difficulties that we have to encounter. I know the almost superhuman power of this combination. They have their hand almost upon the realm of England. Under the guise of Liberalism—under the pretence of legislating in the spirit of the age—they are, as they think, about to seize upon the supreme authority of the realm. But this I can say, that so long as, by the favour of the queen, I stand here, I will oppose to the utmost of my ability the attempt they are making. I believe the policy of the right hon. gentleman, who is their representative, if successful, will change the character of this country. It will deprive the subjects of Her Majesty of some of their most precious privileges, and it will dangerously touch even the tenure of the crown.”

At the close of the debate the government were defeated on the two divisions that took place. Upon Lord Stanley's amendment the majority against the government was sixty, whilst the motion of Mr. Gladstone to go into committee was carried by a majority of fifty-six. The Liberal press now strongly urged upon ministers that it was their duty in face of their defeat to tender their resignation, and give place to the Opposition. Mr. Disraeli declined to accede to these demands, and was consequently abused in the most virulent manner for thus clinging to the sweets of office. The simple truth was that the government refused to regard the House of Commons as representing the opinions of the nation upon the Irish Church question; and until the country had been appealed to ministers considered themselves as perfectly justified in remaining on the Treasury bench. The House then rose for the Easter holidays.

The severe strictures passed upon the disloyal conduct of the Ritualists at the close of Mr. Disraeli's speech upon the

Irish Church were not long to remain unchallenged. They had given rise to much comment among our Romanizing clergy, in which the sweetness of the Christian character was not particularly conspicuous, and the prime minister was called upon to substantiate his assertion. A Rev. Mr. Baker, the vicar of Addington, in Buckinghamshire, and one of the constituents of Mr. Disraeli, despatched a letter to Hughenden, shortly after the Easter recess had been ushered in, requesting some information upon the matter, and regretting that so sweeping a charge had been made. He received the following reply :—

"HUGHENDEN MANOR, Maundy Thursday, 1868.

"REV. SIR,—I have just received your letter, in which, as one of my constituents, you justify your right to ask for some explanation of my alleged assertion that the High-Church Ritualists had been long in secret combination, and were now in open confederacy with Irish Romanists, for the destruction of the union between church and state. I acknowledge your right of making this inquiry; and if I do not notice in detail the various suggestions in your letter, it is from no want of courtesy, but from the necessity of not needlessly involving myself in literary controversy. You are under a misapprehension if you suppose that I intended to cast any slur on the High Church party. I have the highest respect for the High Church party. I believe there is no body of men in this country to which we have been more indebted, from the days of Queen Anne to the days of Queen Victoria, for the maintenance of the orthodox faith, the rights of the crown, and the liberties of the people. In saying this, I have no wish to intimate that the obligations of the country to the other great party in the church are not equally significant. I have never looked upon the existence of parties in our church as a calamity,

I look upon them as a necessity, and a beneficial necessity. They are the natural and inevitable consequences of the mild and liberal principles of our ecclesiastical polity, and of the varying and opposite elements of the human mind and character. *When I spoke I referred to an extreme faction in the church of very moderate date, that does not conceal its ambition to destroy the connection between church and state, and which I have reason to believe has been for some time in secret combination, and is now in open confederacy, with the Irish Romanists for the purpose.* The Liberation Society, with its shallow and short-sighted fanaticism, is a mere instrument in the hands of this confederacy, and will probably be the first victim of the spiritual despotism the Liberation Society is blindly working to establish. As I hold that the dissolution of the union between church and state will cause permanently a greater revolution in this country than foreign conquest, I shall use my utmost energies to defeat these fatal machinations. Believe me, rev. sir,

"Your faithful member and servant,

"B. DISRAELI."

Irish business had so absorbed the attention of the legislature during this part of the session that little progress had been made with the other measures before the House. What with the debates on the motion of Mr. Maguire, and on the resolutions of Mr. Gladstone, the sittings of the chamber had been fully occupied. The army and navy estimates had been delayed beyond the usual time, owing to the illness of Mr. Corry, whilst the measures introduced by the government, such as the Bribery Bill, the Bankruptcy Bill, the Irish Reform Bill, and others, had still to be discussed in committee. It was evident that the labours of the session were to be confined almost exclusively to Irish questions.

## CHAPTER V.

### THE VERDICT OF THE NEW CONSTITUENCIES.

DURING the few days that intervened before the re-assembling of parliament, the question of the Irish Church was the one topic uppermost in men's minds. The victory of the Liberals had encouraged the enemies of Establishment to further efforts, whilst it proved to the Conservative party the absolute necessity of union and determination in their opposition to the proceedings of their rivals, if success was to be hoped for. Meetings were held all over the country, at which the Irish Church was vindicated or denounced; newspapers broke out into abuse of Mr. Gladstone, or of the cabinet which opposed his views; political associations flooded the kingdom with party pamphlets discussing the subject in the most partial and one-sided fashion; the extreme Ritualists showed, by their behaviour on the occasion, how true had been the statement of Mr. Disraeli as to their disloyalty, since they openly united themselves with the Papists, and were among the most venomous of the critics upon the position of the Irish Church and the utility of her Protestant clergy. Never had the sister country taken such an interest in the affairs of Ireland.

Of all the meetings held by the Liberals, the one assembled under the auspices of Earl Russell, in St. James' Hall, London, was the most significant of the agitation then being carried on for the disestablishment of the Irish Church. It was there declared that the Irish Church was in such a position as not to admit of any argument in her defence, and that a policy of disendowment was the only one to be adopted. "I think the people of Ireland," said Earl Russell, "are entitled to demand that all Her Majesty's subjects in that country

should be placed upon a footing of equality, and it is rather a secondary question whether that equality should be obtained by endowment of all the different communions, or by the disendowment of them all. (*Loud cries of "Disendowment!"*) I do not disguise my preferences on that subject; but I say, at once, that as I perceive that the Protestant people in general of England and Scotland do not wish to endow all these communions, and on the other hand that the Roman Catholics in Ireland do not wish to accept any endowment, I at once discard any preferences of my own, and seek for general disendowment." The resolutions proposed in favour of disestablishment and disendowment were then carried by acclamation. A similar meeting was at the same time held by the "United Protestant Defence Committee," which was largely attended, its proceedings being characterized by equal ardour and harmony in resolving not to break up "the last link of the Union," the Irish Church. Subsequently a more influential meeting was held under the presidency of the Archbishop of Canterbury, at which all the more prominent members of the Conservative party were present, to protest against the proposed measure of disestablishment.

The House of Commons re-assembled April 20, 1868, and within a few days the consideration upon the resolutions of Mr. Gladstone was resumed. In spite of the exhaustive manner in which the question of the Irish Church had been discussed before Easter, it still occupied another three nights before the main issue, the cessation of the state church as an establishment, was to be decided. All the

well-worn arguments as to the utility or failure of the Irish Church, the danger of tampering with the Act of Union and alienating the religious property of the country, the necessity of redressing Irish grievances and the like, were again freely gone into by both sides of the House; and if such arguments failed to throw any new light upon the question, they at least served to pass the time, and to exhibit the activity of representatives to admiring constituents. Mr. Disraeli declined to let the House be hurried in the matter. When applied to, in order that the division might be hastened, he remarked that as ministers felt the extreme importance of the issue, they would afford every facility for the discussion of the subject. He declined, therefore, to interfere in any way with the full and free expression of the opinions of every member who desired to declare his views on a question which, it was not concealed, must lead to great and even revolutionary changes. Nor, it must be admitted, were members at all unwilling to avail themselves to the full of the freedom accorded them by this permission.

Mr. Disraeli wound up the debate (April 30, 1868) on the first resolution. He objected, he said, to the disestablishment of the Church in Ireland because he thought it would be most injurious to that country. He believed such a measure would revive and exasperate all those religious animosities which the wiser legislation of the last thirty years had attempted to subdue. Disestablishment would be a very great injury to Ireland, and the plea upon which it was recommended would not bear analysis. If the Church in Ireland was to be disestablished, and its property confiscated because it had not fulfilled the purposes for which it was instituted, what a dangerous precedent would be introduced! "Are there," asked Mr. Disraeli, "no other institutions, and very rich institutions too, that do not fulfil the purposes for which they were instituted? Look to the great Companies in the city of London. Look to the Fish-

mongers' Company, or to the Drapers' Company, or to the Company of Merchant Taylors. They have large estates; but the Company of Fishmongers does not fulfil the purposes for which it was instituted. They no longer take care to provide us with fresh fish. The Drapers sell no cloth; and I have often dined with the Merchant Taylors, and I have never, I believe, met my tailor. Yet these are societies in possession of vast estates, and in Ireland; and they are societies which have been instituted for particular purposes—that we might have excellent cloth and fish, and that our clothes should be cut in the proper fashion. They do not fulfil any of those purposes; and I want to know, therefore, if you confiscate the property of the Irish Church on the ground that it does not fulfil the purposes for which it was instituted, on what ground can you oppose the attempt to confiscate the estates of those great guilds and companies? Therefore we believe that if this resolution be carried it will aggravate the animosities of the Irish people and injure Ireland. We regard it as a retrograde act and a retrograde policy. And we believe, too, that if this resolution be carried you will shake the principle of property throughout the kingdom." \*

The defeat of the government was almost a foregone conclusion. The majority against ministers was 65; for Mr. Gladstone's resolution, 330; against, 265. When the numbers were declared Mr. Disraeli rose up and said:—"The vote at which the committee has now arrived has altered the relations between the government and the House of

\* Has this belief not been fully justified by subsequent events? Already the Liberals are looking with greedy eyes towards the revenues of the great city companies, and are desirous of interfering with the vested interests of the landed gentry. In spite of the emancipation of the Papists, in spite of the abolition of the Irish Church, and in spite of the operations of the recent Land Act which has given the sum of £100,000,000 as a douceur to Irish tenants, Ireland is more dissatisfied than ever. Even a so-called Liberal government is forced at the present day to rule the island by the severities of Coercion Acts, by doubling the Irish police and army, by placing twelve counties under a kind of martial law, and by keeping political opponents for months in gaol without a trial. So much for the blessings that were to ensue from the disestablishment and disendowment of the Irish Church!

Commons; and therefore, as it is necessary for us to consider our position, I shall, with the permission of the House, move the adjournment of the House till Monday." Rumour was, as usual, busy with every species of gossip and report upon the course the government were to adopt; but all prognostications were soon silenced by the ministerial statement made by Lord Malmesbury in the House of Lords and by the premier in the House of Commons. Mr. Disraeli prefaced his statement by a few remarks. He alluded to the circumstances under which the government had taken office, to the successful carrying of the reform bill, and to the happy manner in which affairs both at home and abroad had been conducted. He denied the truth of the accusation that the government were unworthily clinging to office, or that there was anything unconstitutional in governing the country by a minority. In 1852 the Conservative cabinet resigned on a defeat, though begged by their opponents to remain in office. In 1859, on a defeat, the Conservative cabinet, though requested by Lord Palmerston neither to dissolve nor resign, appealed to the country; "which was," said Mr. Disraeli, "as constitutional a course as resigning, and our conduct showed on that occasion there was no unworthy clinging to office on our part." Then as to governing by a minority:—"It is very true," said the prime minister, "that, told by the head, we have never had a majority of pledged partisans; but there have been relations of courtesy and cordiality between the government and the great body of the House, and we were allowed to carry on affairs—as I have shown, not unsuccessfully—because the majority of the House did think that under the circumstances of the case it was to the advantage of the country that we should continue to administer its affairs. It is not wise on the part of the House of Commons to analyze with too close a scrutiny the elements by which a ministry is carried on. To do so would vitiate the practical qualities for which this House is

celebrated." He then instanced the case of Lord John Russell, who for no less a term than five or six years carried on the government with a minority—"being morally supported by a majority, as we have been supported by a majority."

Mr. Disraeli proceeded to state the course he had felt it his duty to take under the circumstances. He had waited upon the queen, and had laid before Her Majesty the position of the government, and the position of parties, and the position of the country with respect to them. "I told Her Majesty," said Mr. Disraeli, "that under the circumstances the advice which her ministers would, in the full spirit of the constitution, offer her, would be that Her Majesty should dissolve this parliament, and take the opinion of the country upon the conduct of her ministers, and on the question at issue. But, at the same time, with the full concurrence of my colleagues, I represented to Her Majesty that there were important occasions on which it was wise that the sovereign should not be embarrassed by personal claims, however constitutionally valid and meritorious; and that if Her Majesty was of opinion that the question at issue could be more satisfactorily settled, or that the interests of the country would be promoted, by the immediate retirement of the present government from office, we were prepared to quit Her Majesty's service immediately, with no other feeling but that which every minister who has served the queen must entertain viz., a feeling of gratitude to Her Majesty for the warm constitutional support which she always gives to her ministers, and I may add—for it is a truth that cannot be concealed—for the aid and assistance which any minister must experience from a sovereign who has such a vast acquaintance with the public affairs. Sir, I in fact tendered my resignation to the queen. Her Majesty commanded me to attend her in audience on the next day, when Her Majesty was pleased to express her pleasure not to accept the resignation of her ministers,

and her readiness to dissolve parliament so soon as the state of public business would permit. Under these circumstances I advised Her Majesty that, although the present constituency was no doubt admirably competent to decide upon the question of the disestablishment of the church, still it was the opinion of Her Majesty's ministers that every effort should be made that the appeal should, if possible, be directed to the new constituencies which the wisdom of parliament provided last year; and I expressed to Her Majesty that, if we had the cordial co-operation of parliament, I was advised by those who are experienced and skilful in these matters, that it would be possible to make arrangements by which that dissolution could take place in the autumn of this year."

This decision of the government was received with strong marks of disapprobation from the Opposition; Mr. Gladstone, Mr. Lowe, and Mr. Bright giving vent to their dissatisfaction in no measured terms. Indeed Mr. Bright went so far as to say, that it was merely for the sake of prolonging his own term of office that Mr. Disraeli had made so outrageous a demand upon the indulgence of parliament. Mr. Disraeli was also taken to task for making an undue use of the name of the queen. The subject again came up for discussion, owing to what the Opposition considered as a discrepancy in the ministerial statement. Mr. Disraeli had said that he went down to Osborne and advised a dissolution, but if Her Majesty should see fit not to accept that advice, he tendered his resignation. To the Upper House the Duke of Richmond stated that "The prime minister, on the part of his colleagues, tendered to his sovereign the resignation of their offices on Friday afternoon. Her Majesty took time to consider the matter, and received the prime minister again in audience upon Saturday." Thus, according to the Duke of Richmond, the resignation was offered first, and nothing then mentioned as to the dissolution. The duke had also said

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that in case of any difficulties being thrown in the way of the government, the queen would make no objection to a dissolution, and that whether the appeal were made to the old or new constituencies would depend upon the course of events, but that the consent of Her Majesty had been obtained to either. Mr. Gladstone wished to have this discrepancy cleared up, and questioned the prime minister upon the matter. Did Mr. Disraeli tender his resignation, and was the proposal to dissolve an afterthought? Or did he offer Her Majesty one of two alternatives—to accept his resignation, or to agree to a dissolution? Also, did he suggest that the appeal to the constituencies should be deferred for six months, until the new Reform Act came into operation, or did he suggest the appeal to be made to the present constituencies?

Mr. Disraeli at once replied to these queries:—"When," said he, "I attended Her Majesty at Osborne, after acquainting Her Majesty with the position of the government, I at once recommended that in the present state of affairs, not only in justice to the government, but for the sake of the great issue at stake, parliament should be dissolved immediately, or as soon as the state of public business permitted."

*Mr. Bright*—"Did you recommend an appeal to the present constituencies?"

*Mr. Disraeli*—"The hon. member has interposed with a matter that has nothing to do with the question. I recommended the dissolution absolutely and unequivocally, without reference to any particular circumstance, as soon as the state of public business should permit. I said afterwards that I had hoped that by giving up all other bills which we had introduced, and by confining our attention to supplemental reform measures, if the House acted cordially with me, a general election might take place by an appeal to the new constituencies. As I was the person who had audience of Her Majesty, I think my statement should be taken; but if any one of my

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colleagues has elsewhere made a statement which conveys a different impression, the logical procedure would be, that that colleague should be called upon to explain the discrepancy." A very natural answer to somewhat impertinent questions.

Mr. Disraeli, though in a minority, yet with the rod of dissolution in his hand was now master of the situation. If the Opposition refused to agree to the measures he laid before it, the prime minister could fairly state that he had been forced to appeal to the existing constituencies; hence the new parliament would have to be dissolved at a very early stage of its existence, so as to allow the new constituencies to exercise the franchises which had recently been conferred on them. The Opposition, aware of this, did all in their power to irritate ministers by entering upon a most vindictive and factious course of procedure. The second and third resolutions of Mr. Gladstone were proceeded with and carried, the government declining to divide against them.\* Several motions were also made by various members, in order to define the status of other religious bodies in Ireland who received aids or contributions from the state. And now a somewhat lively scene ensued. We know that thieves, so long as their attention is absorbed by conducting the proceedings of a robbery, act in perfect unison and

\* Mr. Gladstone's resolutions, as finally reported to the House, were in these words :—" 1. That it is necessary that the established church of Ireland should cease to exist as an establishment, due regard being had to all personal interests and to all individual rights of property. 2. That, subject to the foregoing considerations, it is expedient to prevent the creation of new personal interests by the exercise of any personal patronage, and to confine the operations of the ecclesiastical commissioners of Ireland to objects of immediate necessity, or such as involve individual rights, pending the final decision of parliament. 3. That an address be presented to Her Majesty, humbly to pray that, with a view to preventing, by legislation during the present session, the creation of new personal interests through the exercise of any public patronage, Her Majesty would be graciously pleased to place at the disposal of parliament her interest in the temporalities of the archbishops, bishops, and other ecclesiastical dignities and benefices in Ireland, and in the custody thereof. 4. That when legislative effect shall have been given to the first resolution of this committee, respecting the established church of Ireland, it is right and necessary that the grant to Maynooth and the *Regium Donum* be discontinued, due regard being had to all personal interests."

harmony; it is when the theft has been carried out that altercations and quarrels arise as to the division of the booty. The truth of this remark was now to be exemplified by the conduct of the spoliators of the Irish Church. Mr. Sinclair Aytoun proposed a resolution, that when "the Anglican Church in Ireland is disestablished and disendowed the grant to Maynooth and the *Regium Donum* shall be discontinued; and that no part of the secularized funds of the Anglican Church, or any state funds whatever, be applied in any way or under any form to the endowment or furtherance of the Roman Catholic religion in Ireland, or to the establishment or maintenance of Roman Catholic denominational schools or colleges." This resolution led to some warm discussion, during which Mr. Disraeli left the House.

Mr. Ayrton, the member for the Tower Hamlets, whose suave demeanour and high-bred manner, coupled with his polished deference to the rules of the House, fully entitled him to act as the arbiter on all occasions where parliamentary etiquette was concerned, commented severely upon the absence of the head of the government during the discussion by the committee of so important a question. Mr. Disraeli happened to re-enter the chamber when Mr. Ayrton was laying down the law as to the duties of the leader of the House, and on the conclusion of the lecture, the premier rose to vindicate his conduct in a few words. The duties and privileges of the leader of the House were, he said, very considerable; but he thought they ought to be exercised with moderation, and perhaps he might presume to say with some degree of modesty. If he were to take every opportunity of speaking upon every subject, and were he to thrust himself forward against the view of the House in order to give members his opinions upon every possible topic, perhaps he should by so doing not altogether fulfil the duties of the leader of the House, and might lose the regard and respect of those among whom he sat. No

doubt when Mr. Ayrton had arrived at the position of leader of the House, the conduct of the debate would be very different. "Still," said Mr. Disraeli, "I am of opinion that the manner in which I attempt to perform my duties as leader of this House is preferable to that ideal which, on several occasions, the hon. member for the Tower Hamlets has offered to the admiration of this assembly." Then he justified his absence by the following reason, which certainly did not tend to smooth matters. "What has recently occurred has amounted to what I have always contemplated would take place and what will be repeated. There has been a quarrel among the hon. gentlemen opposite for the plunder, and I do not think that it was my duty to give an opinion upon such a subject." It only showed, he continued, that those who had introduced the resolutions had introduced into the country the elements of confusion.

This sneer appears to have been severely felt by Mr. Bright, and the combative man of peace was not slow to retort upon the prime minister with irrelevant comments and distorted interpretations, which might be suitable to a meeting-house, but which were certainly out of place in the House of Commons. After having expressed his approval of the policy of Mr. Gladstone towards the Irish Church, Mr. Bright proceeded to attack Mr. Disraeli for having changed his views upon the subject, and for having unnecessarily introduced the name of the queen into debate. "I have not," he said (May 7, 1868), "been endeavouring to climb the ladder of parliamentary promotion and notoriety. No, sir, I have only had the single object—so far as I have had anything to do with Irish questions—to promote what appeared to be just to that country, and which would tend to the advantage of the United Kingdom. The right hon. gentleman the other night, with a mixture of pompousness and sometimes of servility, talked at large of the interviews which he had with his sovereign. I venture to say that a minister who

deceives his sovereign is as guilty as the conspirator who would dethrone her. I do not charge the right hon. gentleman with deceiving his sovereign; but if he had not changed the opinion which he held twenty-five years ago, and which he has said in the main was right, then I fear that he has not stated all that it was his duty to state in the interviews which he had with his sovereign. Let me tell hon. gentlemen opposite, and the right hon. gentleman in particular, that any man in this country who puts the sovereign in the front of a great struggle like this into which it may be we are about to enter—who points to the Irish people, and says from the floor of this House—'Your queen holds the flag under which we, the enemies of religious equality and justice to Ireland, are marshalled—I say that the minister who does that is guilty of a very high crime and a great misdemeanour against his sovereign and against his country. And there is no honour, and there is no reputation, there is no glory, there is no future name that any minister can gain by conduct like this, that will acquit him to posterity of one of the most grievous offences against his country which a prime minister can possibly commit.'

These observations were as spiteful as they were irrelevant. If Mr. Bright had wished to vent his venom upon Mr. Disraeli, he should have availed himself of his opportunity at the time when the ministerial statement was made, and not have relieved himself of his acrid burden days after when the discussion had been solely confined to the affairs of the Irish Church. But men, when smarting under a reproof which they feel to be just, are always anxious to retaliate, whether in or out of season, to prove that they are not suffering from the stings of conscience; and the accusation of Mr. Disraeli as to the quarrel about "the plunder" had struck home to many a pious mind among the Opposition. Consequently the prime minister contented himself with briefly alluding, in a few words of scorn, to the remarks of Mr. Bright. "I shall not

condescend," he said, "to notice at length the observations of the hon. member for Birmingham. He says that when it was my duty to make a communication to the House, of the greatest importance, and which I certainly wished to make—as I hope I did make it—in a manner not unbecoming the occasion, I was at once 'pompous and servile.' Well, sir, if it suits the heat of party acrimony to impute such qualities to me, any gentleman may do so; but I am in the memory and in the feeling of gentlemen on both sides of the House—and *fortunately there are gentlemen on both sides of this House*—they will judge of the accuracy of this representation of my conduct. It is to their feeling and to their sentiment on both sides of the House that I must appeal; and no words of mine, if the charge be true, can vindicate me. The hon. gentleman says that he will make no charge against me—and then he makes insinuations which, if he believes, he ought to bring forth boldly as charges. I defy the hon. member for Birmingham, notwithstanding his stale invective, to come down to the House and substantiate any charge of the kind which he has presumed only to insinuate. Let him prefer those charges; I will meet him; and I will appeal to the verdict only of gentlemen who sit on the same side of the House as himself."

This challenge Mr. Bright did not accept. The traducer when openly confronted invariably takes refuge in silence or shifty disavowals. Mr. Bright has, in the course of his long political life, reconciled many diverse acts and opinions to himself; he has assailed the court and the cabinet, and he has gone to the one and held the seals in the other; he has assailed sinecures, and he has held them; he has assailed Coercion Acts, and he has participated in the passing of them. It would, however, be curious to learn by what process of reasoning he has reconciled a systematic course of acidulated animadversion towards his political opponents with the profession of a creed of such exquisite

purity and simplicity as to be superior to the influence of rank, to the control of a priesthood, and even to the ordinary language of social intercourse.

The resolutions of Mr. Gladstone having passed the House, the answer of Her Majesty to the address presented in pursuance of the third resolution was awaited with some anxiety. It was feared by the Liberal party that the Conservatives, who looked upon the address as an objectionable interference with the prerogative of the crown, might have suggested to the royal mind to return an answer unfavourable to the hopes of the majority of the Commons. These fears were soon removed by Her Majesty replying in such a manner as to show there had never been any intention of allowing the prerogative to oppose the desire of parliament. The answer of the crown was as follows:—

"I have received your address, praying that with a view to preventing by legislation during the present session the creation of new personal interests through the exercise of my public patronage, I would place at the disposal of parliament my interest in the temporalities of the archbishoprics, bishoprics, and other ecclesiastical dignities and benefices in Ireland, and in the custody thereof. Relying on the wisdom of my parliament, I desire that my interest in the temporalities of the United Church of England and Ireland in Ireland may not stand in the way of the consideration by parliament of any measure relating thereto that may be introduced in the present session."

These preliminaries settled, Mr. Gladstone at once moved for leave to bring in a bill "to prevent for a limited time new appointments in the Church of Ireland, and to restrain for the same period in certain respects the proceedings of the ecclesiastical commissioners for Ireland." Upon the second reading of this Irish Church Suspensory Bill a long discussion ensued, in which Mr. Disraeli took a prominent part. In laying his measure before the

House, Mr. Gladstone said that it was a necessary consequence of his second resolution; and if they were to carry into effect the resolutions which the House had agreed to by a large majority, it was imperative to prevent embarrassments by putting a stop to the creation of new vested interests. It was his wish to bring about by the measure religious equality in Ireland by disestablishment and general disendowment, by the repeal of the Maynooth Act, and the discontinuance of the *Regium Donum*. In disestablishing the Irish Church he emphatically disavowed the idea of establishing any other religious communion, and he had at last resolved to abandon for Ireland the maintenance in any form of a salaried or stipendiary clergy.

After speeches from Mr. Gathorne Hardy, Lord Elcho, Mr. W. E. Forster, and others, Mr. Disraeli addressed the House. He began by explaining the reasons which induced him to oppose the bill, though he had not opposed the second and the third of the resolutions of Mr. Gladstone. "The right hon. gentleman," he said (May, 22, 1868), "who introduced the second reading of the bill this evening, seemed to complain very much that I should offer any opposition to his motion, on the ground that the ministry had not opposed the second and third resolutions, which he previously moved. We did not oppose those resolutions, because, as I described them, we looked on them as corollaries of the first resolution: and the right hon. gentleman admitted the justice of that description. It does not follow that, when we oppose a policy, we are bound to oppose it on every stage. Common courtesy and common sense teach us that such a way of conducting public business would be utterly impracticable. We had taken on the resolutions of the right hon. gentleman two divisions in full Houses, and therefore I only followed parliamentary custom in announcing, that though we objected to the second and third resolutions as strongly as to the first, yet we should be content not to

take any further division on them, expressing only our protest against them, but that we should reserve our parliamentary right, when the resolutions assumed the shape of a bill, to express our dissent from the measure.

"I apprehend that the course we took was not only convenient to the House, but consonant with common sense. To say that because we did not take further divisions on the second and third resolutions we are therefore estopped from opposing the bill is a proposition which every person, on reflection, will feel to be one that cannot be sustained. But the right hon. gentleman, not content with maintaining that we are unreasonable in opposing the bill, because we did not oppose, except by protest, the second and third resolutions, says that we ought to support the bill. The right hon. gentleman said, 'Not only am I astonished that you oppose the bill, but I had every reason to believe that you would deem it your policy and an advantage to support it, because you have consented to the appointment of a committee to investigate the condition of the Irish Church; and as you yourselves admit the possibility of the committee proposing considerable modifications in the temporalities of the Irish Church, what could be more convenient than that in the meantime you should pass a suspensory bill which would prevent the creation of any new vested interest, which it would be very inconvenient for you to have to deal with by after legislation?'

"I am perfectly willing so far to agree with the right hon. gentleman, that if he will undertake in committee to propose clauses providing that all the resources which may accrue from the suspended bishoprics and rectories should, when our ultimate legislation is decided upon, be apportioned and secured to the established church in Ireland, I will consider his proposition of supporting the present bill with feelings very much inclined to accede to his request. But the right hon. gentleman

forgets that he introduces to our notice a bill which contains no provisions of that nature. He does not secure that the results of the suspension of these benefices will be apportioned hereafter to the benefit of that Establishment which we seek to uphold, but, on the contrary, he has to-night given a new version of his policy; and, alarmed by an impression in the House that led to the proposal of a very awkward motion—namely, that he was prepared, when the results of suspending those benefices had accrued, to allot the sums thus acquired to the advantage of another church, that is, the Roman Catholic Church—the right hon. gentleman comes down to-night and tells us most distinctly that his policy is that none of the sequestered revenues of the established church in Ireland shall be apportioned to the maintenance of the religious institutions of any other creed whatever.

“Well, what is the consequence? The right hon. gentleman has come down to-night to give us new expression of his policy, to propose that church revenues—that funds which have been consecrated to religious purposes—shall in future be applied to secular uses. Therefore, the question has assumed quite a different aspect to-night. Sir, I am as much opposed to the new scheme of the right hon. gentleman as to the one that he was accused of holding during the late debate, and which this evening he has repudiated. I am myself entirely opposed to applying any property which has been once devoted to spiritual purposes, to what are called secular uses. I know of no instance in which appropriations of that kind have ever occurred in which they have not ended either in the advantage of some individual or of some family; or, if there has been some more plausible appropriation for a public purpose, it has been applied with the utmost wastefulness, and ultimately with complete misapplication. On these grounds, then, I vindicate my opposition to the bill of the right hon. gentleman, and I cannot agree to support it.”

Mr. Disraeli then proceeded to defend the Irish policy introduced by Lord Mayo, and which had been assailed by the Opposition. He denied that the government had ever proposed to endow a Roman Catholic university; “on the contrary, there was from others a proposition that a Roman Catholic university should receive an endowment, and that endowment was refused by us.” He also denied that the government proposed to pay the Roman Catholic clergy or to increase the *Regium Donum*. Having contradicted these false accusations, he touched upon the motive of the Opposition in introducing the bill, which was “justice to Ireland”—justice must be done to the Irish people. “Now, who are the Irish people?” asked the prime minister. “The Irish people,” he answered, “consist of several races and of several religions, and the hon. member wants us to do something to satisfy a portion of the people who may be, and probably are, the majority. But it does not follow that because you do something which you assume may please the majority, you will not offend a very large and very powerful minority of the people; and in your accounts and your calculations as to the character and effect of your policy it is the most unwise thing in the world to disregard the feelings and the interests of powerful minorities. For what will be the consequence of disregarding the feelings and the interests of powerful minorities? Why, that your scheme of conciliation, your attempt to pacify a country and to establish what you call “justice for the people,” would probably end in your creating among other classes, who are now satisfied and content, the same discontent and dissatisfaction which you allege to prevail in that portion of the nation which you describe as, and which may be, the majority.

“Now, I say there is not that similarity between the cases of Ireland and Scotland which the hon. gentleman [Mr. W. E. Forster], as is common, assumes to exist. In the

first place you must, as wise and practical men, deal with what exists. Here is a church established for centuries in Ireland with a very powerful and numerous body in direct communion with it, and supported also by the sympathies of another numerous body, who, though not in direct communion with it, look upon it with respect and reverence. And you must remember that a mass of population like the Protestant population of Ireland never existed in Scotland as opposed to the Presbyterian form of worship. It never existed; and, therefore, there is no real similarity between the two countries. And even if there had been, we must remember that what we have to deal with in Ireland exists at present, has been settled for a great number of years, and is now part of history, having settled itself by the force of circumstances over which we ourselves have no control.

. . . . The statesman who embarks in such a crusade, and who, without the slightest regard to the feelings and interests of the great body of the Protestant population in Ireland, acts in complete disregard of those feelings and interests, but yet supposes that he is going to establish a system in Ireland which is to cure all evils and to satisfy all persons, is embarking in one of the wildest enterprises that ever the disordered imagination of man conceived."

Nor could he, continued Mr. Disraeli, refrain from considering the question with reference to the larger issue which was at stake, and any one who considered it with a total disregard to consequences was not taking that sound view of the circumstances with which they had to deal, which the necessity of the case required. "*I say this act is the first step to the disestablishment of the English Church.*" You may draw distinctions; you may say it applies only to Ireland; you may say that the church as established in Ireland is different from the church as established in England; but you have not proved that. Sitting opposite to me are many gentlemen who on other occasions, have proved just the reverse, and

have alleged all the charges they have made against the Church in Ireland against the Church in England also. The most that could be urged by those who dissent from me on the other side of the House is that it is a difference in degree; but I say the principle involved is the connection of a religious establishment with the state, and the question is whether you will have it or not. I have heard some comments made to-night upon observations I made early in the controversy. I made none that I regret or did not make advisedly; and I do believe most solemnly, so far as the policy which is the consequence of the alleged crisis in Ireland is concerned and can influence us, it is one that will bring about a crisis in England—that is my opinion—and which, if pursued, will disturb the social system of this country to its very centre. I believe that this is an opinion very prevalent in the country, and that every day it grows stronger and wider among those classes who think and reflect, and who never act until they have thought and reflected.

"An hon. gentleman accused me of raising a 'No Popery' cry. Allow me to say I have not heard that cry; but I have heard a cry raised in this country now that I never heard before, and that is the cry of 'No Protestantism.' I have heard it frequently, and read of it in various places. It is not for me to refer to expressions which are not used in this House; if I had heard them here, I should have noticed them before. That is the only cry I have heard connected with this matter, and it is one extremely novel in this country. I am not here to impress upon the House my views of what the public feeling is upon this all-important question. I know nothing more idle than to go out of your way to give your own opinion as to the public sentiment of the day; that will and must declare itself, not from what we state in this House, but from the deep and earnest feelings of the people; and I only make use of these observations in answer to those who have alleged a view of the

public sentiment of the country of a very different character. When I am told that we have attempted to raise a cry, when I am told that the country disregards any appeal to it upon this all-important subject, when I am told that there is only one opinion in the country and that is in favour of the policy of the right hon. gentleman the member for South Lancashire, I am bound to assert that the result of my observation, information, and experience is of a totally different character. I do not wish to dwell upon that now, but I say that my experience and my conviction upon that subject are of a totally different character.

"I believe in this country there is very great agitation upon this subject. I believe there is a strong feeling that the right hon. gentleman has embarked in a most dangerous policy, that its consequences may be most serious to the country, that they may dim the splendour of the British crown, and lower the character of the people of England. I believe that to be the opinion of the powerful classes in this country—of classes powerful not from station merely, but from the possession and exercise of virtues, and who never interfere in political affairs except from the strongest motives of public duty. If this be a right view, or even an approximately correct view, it is most unwise to disregard or affect to despise it. It is not by managed majorities—it is not by such means that you can change the opinion of a country. I do not say that we are right, I do not say that you are wrong. The observation I have made is a general and a true one. Whatever is the opinion of the people of England upon this great question—whether they will maintain the connection between church and state, and whether they believe that such a connection is necessary for the happiness of the people and the security of the realm—whatever may be their opinion upon the subject—rest assured that that opinion will be asserted and will be triumphant."

The fate of this measure is well known. In spite of the opposition of the Conserva-

tive party, the second reading was carried by a large majority, and the bill passed through the popular chamber with but few modifications. In the Upper House it, however, met with a very different reception. After a warm and brilliant discussion, which lasted three nights, the second reading of the bill was rejected by a majority of ninety-five. The measure was therefore dropped for the session.

The debates in the House of Commons upon the condition of Ireland and the future of the Irish Church had so monopolized the attention of the public as to cause much legislative business to pass unnoticed. Yet the session had been a useful and an active one. In spite of the heat of the climate, the restive mules, the narrow passes, and the rest of the gloomy forebodings of Mr. Lowe, the Abyssinian war had been brought to a successful end. The prisoners had been released, the almost inaccessible fortress of Magdala had been destroyed, and the mortified King Theodore had perished by his own hand. "I rise," said Mr. Disraeli (July 2, 1868), when proposing a vote of thanks to the forces engaged in the expedition, "I rise to move that the thanks of this House be given to those who planned and accomplished one of the most remarkable military enterprises of this century. When the invasion of Abyssinia was first mooted it was denounced as a rash enterprise, pregnant with certain peril and probable disaster. It was described, indeed, as one of the most rash undertakings which had ever been recommended by a government to parliament. The country was almost unknown to us, or known only as one difficult of access, and very deficient in all those supplies which are necessary for an army. Indeed, the commander-in-chief, in order to enter the country which he was about to invade, had to construct a road over a wall of mountain, using the bed of an exhausted torrent for this purpose, and actually entered a high table-land, wild and in great part barren, continuously intersected with chains of mountains of a very





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